THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF WALTER H. PAGE

BURTON J. HENDRICK

SCHOOL EDITION

1928

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(School Edition)

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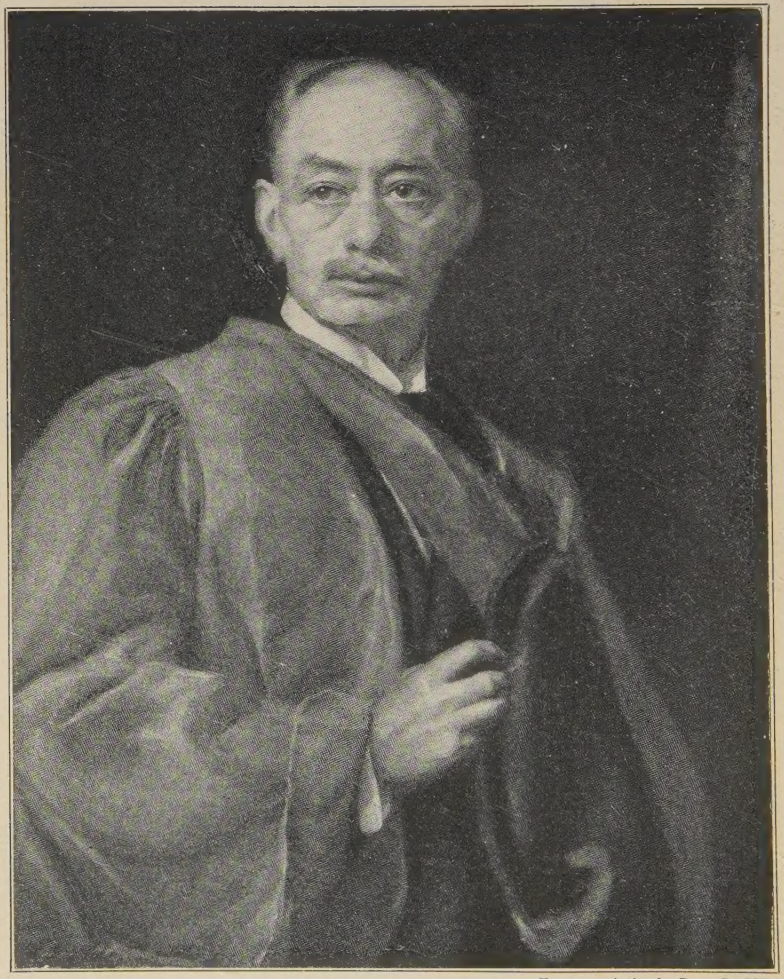

From a painting by P. A. LASZLO

Walter H. Page

The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page

By

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Adapted for school use by

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CHAPTER I

A RECONSTRUCTION BOYHOOD

THE earliest recollections of any man have great biographical interest, and this is especially the case with Walter Page, for not the least dramatic aspect of his life was that it spanned the two greatest wars in history. His last weeks in England Page spent at Sandwich, on the coast of Kent; every day and every night he could hear the pounding of the great guns in France, as the Germans were making their last desperate attempt to reach Paris or the Channel ports. His memories of his childhood days in America were similarly the sights and sounds of war. Page was a North Carolina boy; he has himself recorded the impression that the Civil War left upon his mind.

"One day," he writes, "when the cotton fields were white and the elm leaves were falling, in the soft autumn of the Southern climate wherein the sky is fathomlessly clear, the locomotive's whistle blew a much longer time than usual as the train approached Millworth. It did not stop at so small a station except when there was somebody to get off or to get on, and so long a blast meant that someone was coming. Sam and I ran down the avenue of elms to see who it was.

Sam was my Negro companion, philosopher, and friend. I was ten years old and Sam said that he was fourteen. There was constant talk about the war. Many men of the neighborhood had gone away somewhere—that was certain; but Sam and I had a theory that the war was only a story. We had been fooled about old granny Thomas's bringing the baby and long ago we had been fooled also about Santa Claus. The war might be another such invention, and we sometimes suspected that it was. But we found out the truth that day, and for this reason it is among my clearest early recollections.

"For, when the train stopped, they put off a big box and gently laid it in the shade of the fence. The only man at the station was the man who had come to change the mail bags; and he said that this was Billy Morris's coffin and that he had been killed in a battle. He asked us to stay with it till he could send word to Mr. Morris, who lived two miles away. The man came back presently and leaned against the fence till old Mr. Morris arrived, an hour or more later. The lint of cotton was on his wagon, for he was hauling his crop to the gin when the sad news reached him; and he came in his shirt sleeves, his wife on the wagon seat with him.

"All the neighborhood gathered at the church, a funeral was preached and there was a long prayer for our success against the invaders, and Billy Morris was buried. I remember that I wept the more because it now seemed to me that my doubt about the war had somehow done Billy Morris an injustice. Old Mrs. Gregory wept more loudly than anybody else; and she kept saying, while the service was going on, 'It'll be my John next.' In a little while, sure enough, John Gregory's coffin was put off the train, as Billy Morris's

had been, and I regarded her as a woman gifted with prophecy. Other coffins, too, were put off from time to time. About the war there could no longer be a doubt. And, a little later, its realities and horrors came nearer home to us, with swift, deep experiences.

"One day my father took me to the camp and parade ground ten miles away, near the capital. The General and the Governor sat on horses and the soldiers marched by them and the band played. They were going to the front. There surely must be a war at the front, I told Sam that night. Still more coffins were brought home, too, as the months and the years passed; and the women of the neighborhood used to come and spend whole days with my mother, sewing for the soldiers. So precious became woolen cloth that every rag was saved and the threads were unraveled to be spun and woven into new fabrics. And they baked bread and roasted chickens and sheep and pigs and made cakes, all to go to the soldiers at the front." [1]

The quality that is uppermost in the Page stock, both in the past and in the present generation, is that of the builder and the pioneer. The ancestor of the North Carolina Pages was a Lewis Page, who, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, left the original American home in Virginia, and started life anew in what was then regarded as the less civilized country to the south. It may safely be assumed that the impelling motive was that love of seeking out new things, of constructing a new home in the wilderness, which has never forsaken his descendants. His son, Anderson Page, manifesting this same love of change,

[1] From "The Southerner," Chapter I. The first chapter in this novel is practically autobiographical, though fictitious names have been used.

went farther south into Wake County, and acquired a plantation of a thousand acres about twelve miles north of Raleigh. He cultivated this estate with slaves, sending his abundant crops of cotton and tobacco to Petersburg, Virginia, a traffic that made him sufficiently prosperous to give several of his sons a college education.

The son who is chiefly interesting at the present time, Allison Francis Page, the father of the future Ambassador, did not enjoy this opportunity. This fact in itself gives an insight into his character. While his brothers were grappling with Latin and Greek and theology, we catch glimpses of the older brother battling with the logs in the Cape Fear River, or penetrating the virgin pine forest, felling trees and converting its raw material to the uses of a growing civilization. Like many of the Page breed, this Page was a giant in size and in strength, as sound morally and physically as the mighty forests in which a considerable part of his life was spent, brave, determined, aggressive, domineering almost to the point of intolerance, deeply religious and abstemious—a mixture of the frontiersman and the Old Testament prophet.

Though he was not especially versed in the learning of the schools, Walter Page's father had a mind that was keen and far-reaching. He was a pioneer in politics as he was in the practical concerns of life. Though he was the son of slave-holding progenitors and even owned slaves himself, he was not a believer in slavery. The country that he primarily loved was not Moore County or North Carolina, but the United States of America. In politics he was a Whig, which meant that, in the years preceding the Civil War, he was opposed to the extension of slavery and did not regard the election of Abraham Lincoln as a sufficient

provocation for the secession of the Southern States.

If we are seeking an ancestral explanation for that moral ruggedness, that quick perception of the difference between right and wrong, that unobscured vision into men and events, and that deep devotion to America and to democracy which formed the fiber of Walter Page's being, we evidently need look no further than his father. But the son had qualities which the older man did not possess—an enthusiasm for literature and learning, a love of the beautiful in Nature and in art, above all a gentleness of temperament and of manner. These qualities he held in common with his mother. On his father's side Page was undiluted English; on his mother's he was French and English. Her father was John Samuel Raboteau, the descendant of Huguenot refugees who had fled from France on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; her mother was Esther Barclay, a member of a family which gave the name of Barclaysville to a small town halfway between Raleigh and Fayetteville, North Carolina. It is a member of this tribe to whom Page once referred as the "vigorous Barclay who held her receptions to notable men in her bedroom during the years of her bedridden condition." She was the proprietor of the "Half Way House," a tavern located between Fayetteville and Raleigh; and in her old age she kept royal state, in the fashion which Page describes, for such as were socially entitled to this consideration. The most vivid impression which her present-day descendants retain is that of her fervent devotion to the Southern cause. She carried the spirit of secession to such an extreme that she had the gate to her yard painted to give a complete presentment of the Confederate Flag.

The granddaughter of this determined and rebellious

lady, Walter Page's mother, had also her positive quality, but in a somewhat more subdued form. She did not die until 1897, and so the recollection of her is fresh and vivid. As a mature woman she was undemonstrative and soft spoken; a Methodist of old-fashioned Wesleyan type, she dressed with a Quaker-like simplicity, her brown hair brushed flatly down upon a finely shaped head and her garments destitute of ruffles or ornamentation. The home which she directed was a home without playing cards or dancing or smoking or wine-bibbing or other worldly frivolities, yet the memories of her presence which Catherine Page has left are not at all austere. Duty was with her the prime consideration of life, and fundamental morals the first conceptions which she instilled in her children's growing minds, yet she had a quiet sense of humor and a real love of fun.

She had also strong likes and dislikes, and was not especially hospitable to men and women who fell under her disapproval. A small North Carolina town, in the years preceding and following the Civil War, was not a fruitful soil for cultivating an interest in things intellectual, yet those who remember Walter Page's mother remember her always with a book in her hand. She would read at her knitting and at her miscellaneous household duties, which were rather arduous in the straitened days that followed the war, and the books she read were always substantial ones. Perhaps because her son Walter was in delicate health, perhaps because his early tastes and temperament were not unlike her own, perhaps because he was her oldest surviving child, the fact remains that, of a family of eight, he was generally regarded as the child with whom she was especially sympathetic.

The picture of mother and son in those early days

is an altogether charming one. Page's mother was only twenty-four when he was born; she retained her youth for many years after that event, and during his early childhood, in appearance and manner, she was little more than a girl. When Walter was a small boy, he and his mother used to take long walks in the woods, sometimes spending the entire day, fishing along the brooks, hunting wild flowers, now and then pausing while the mother read pages of Dickens or of Scott. These experiences Page never forgot. Nearly all his letters to his mother—to whom, even in his busiest days in New York, he wrote constantly —have been accidentally destroyed, but a few scraps indicate the close spiritual bond that existed between the two. Always he seemed to think of his mother as young. Through his entire life, in whatever part of the world he might be, and however important was the work in which he might be engaged, Page never failed to write her a long and affectionate letter at Christmas.

"Well, I've gossiped a night or two"—such is the conclusion of his Christmas letter of 1893, when Page was thirty-eight, with a growing family of his own— "till I've filled the paper—all such little news and less nonsense as most gossip and most letters are made of. But it is for you to read between the lines. That's where the love lies, dear Mother. I wish you were here Christmas; we should welcome you as nobody else in the world can be welcomed. But wherever you are and though all the rest have the joy of seeing you, which is denied to me, never a Christmas comes but I feel as near you as I did years and years ago when we were young. (In those years *big* fish bit in old Wiley Bancom's pond by the railroad: they must have been two inches long!)—I would give a

year's growth to have the pleasure of having you here. . . .

"God bless you.
"WALTER."

Such were the father and mother of Walter Hines Page; they were married at Fayetteville, North Carolina, July 5, 1849; two children who preceded Walter died in infancy. The latter was born at Cary, August 15, 1855.

Page's home was almost the last stopping place of Sherman's army on its march through Georgia and the Carolinas, and the Confederacy came to an end, with Johnston's surrender of the last Confederate Army, at Durham, only fifteen miles from his native village. Walter, a boy of ten, his brother Robert, aged six, and the Negro "companion" Tance, stood at the second-story window and watched Sherman's soldiers pass their house, in hot pursuit of General "Joe" Wheeler's cavalry. The thing that most astonished the children was the vast size of the army, which took all day to file by their home. They had never realized that either of the fighting forces could embrace such great numbers of men.

One day a kindly Northern soldier, sympathizing with the boy because of the small rations left for the local population, invited him to join the officers' mess at dinner. Walter drew proudly back.

"I'll starve before I'll eat with the Yankees," he said.

"I slept that night on a trundle bed by my mother's," Page wrote years afterward, describing these early scenes, "for her room was the only room left for the family, and we had all lived there since the day before. The dining room and the kitchen were now superflu-

ous, because there was nothing more to cook or to eat. . . . A week or more after the army corps had gone, I drove with my father to the capital one day, and almost every mile of the journey we saw a blue coat or a gray coat lying by the road, with bones or hair protruding—the unburied and the forgotten of either army. Thus I had come to know what war was, and death by violence was among the first deep impressions made on my mind. My emotions must have been violently dealt with and my sensibilities blunted—or sharpened? Who shall say? The wounded and the starved straggled home from hospitals and from prisons. There was old Mr. Sanford, the shoemaker, come back again, with a body so thin and a step so uncertain that I expected to see him fall to pieces. Mr. Larkin and Joe Tatum went on crutches; and I saw a man at the post office one day whose cheek and ear had been torn away by a shell. . . .

"But there was the cheerful gentleness of my mother to draw my thoughts to different things. I can even now recall many special little plans that she made to keep my mind from battles. She hid the military cap that I had worn. She bought from me my military buttons and put them away. She would call me in and tell me pleasant stories of her own childhood. She would put down her work to make puzzles with me, and she read gentle books to me and kept away from me all the stories of the war and of death that she could. Whatever hardships befell her (and they must have been many) she kept a tender manner of resignation and of cheerful patience.

"After a while the neighborhood came to life again. There were more widows, more sonless mothers, more empty sleeves and wooden legs than anybody there

had ever seen before. But the mimosa bloomed, the cotton was planted again, and the peach trees blossomed; and the barnyard and the stable again became full of life. For, when the army marched away, they, too, were as silent as an old battlefield. The last hen had been caught under the corn crib by a 'Yankee' soldier, who had torn his coat in this brave raid. . . .

"Every year the cotton bloomed and ripened and opened white to the sun; for the ripening of the cotton and the running of the river and the turning of the mills make the thread not of my story only but of the story of our Southern land—of its institutions, of its misfortunes and of its place in the economy of the world; and they will make the main threads of its story, I am sure, so long as the sun shines on our white fields and the rivers run—a story that is now rushing swiftly into a happier narrative of a broader day. The same women who had guided the spindles in war-time were again at their tasks—they at least were left; but the machinery was now old and worked ill. Negro men, who had wandered a while looking for an invisible 'freedom,' came back and went to work on the farm from force of habit. They now received wages and bought their own food. That was the only apparent difference that freedom had brought them."

It was a tragic world into which this boy Page had been born. He was ten years old when the Civil War came to an end, and his early life was therefore cast in a desolate country. Like all of his neighbors, Frank Page had been ruined by the war. Both the Southern and Northern armies had passed over the Page territory; compared with the military depredations with which Page became familiar in the last years of his life, the Federal troops did not particu-

larly misbehave, the attacks on hen roosts and the destruction of feather beds representing the extreme of their "atrocities"; but no country can entertain two great fighting forces without feeling the effects for a prolonged period. Life in this part of North Carolina again became reduced to its fundamentals. The old homesteads and the Negro huts were still left standing, their interiors for the most part unharmed, but nearly everything else had disappeared. Horses, cattle, hogs, livestock of all kinds had vanished before the advancing hosts of hungry soldiers; and there was one thing which was even more a rarity than these. That was money. Confederate veterans went around in their faded gray uniforms, not only because they loved them, but because they did not have the wherewithal to buy new wardrobes. Judges, planters, and other dignified members of the community became hack drivers from the necessity of picking up a few small coins.

Page's father was more fortunate than the rest, for he had one asset with which to accumulate a little liquid capital: he possessed a fine peach orchard, which was particularly productive in the summer of 1865, and the Northern soldiers, who drew their pay in money that had real value, developed a weakness for the fruit. Walter Page, a boy of ten, used to take his peaches to Raleigh and sell them to the "invader"; although he still disdained having companionable relations with the enemy, he was not above meeting them on a business footing; and the greenbacks and silver coin obtained in this way laid a new basis for the family fortunes.

"Wat" Page—he is still known by this name in his old home—was a tall, rangy, curly-headed boy, with brown hair and brown eyes, fond of fishing and hunt-

ing, not especially robust, but conspicuously alert and vital. Such of his old playmates as survive recall chiefly his keenness of observation, his contagious laughter, his devotion to reading and to talk. He was also given to taking long walks in the woods, frequently with the solitary companionship of a book. Indeed, his extremely efficient family regarded him as a dreamer and were not entirely clear as to what purpose he was destined to serve in a community which, above all, demanded practical men.

Such elementary schools as North Carolina possessed had vanished in the war; the prevailing custom was for the better-conditioned families to join forces and engage a teacher for their assembled children. In such a primary school in Cary Page learned the elementary branches, though his mother herself taught him to read and write. The boy showed such aptitude in his studies that his mother began to hope, though in no aggressive fashion, that he might some day become a Methodist clergyman; she had given him his middle name,"Hines," in honor of her favorite preacher—a kinsman. At the age of twelve Page was transferred to the Bingham School, then located at Mebane. This was the Eton of North Carolina, from a social and an educational standpoint. It was a military school; the boys all dressed in gray uniforms built on the plan of the Confederate army; the hero constantly paraded before their imaginations was Robert E. Lee; discipline was rigidly military; more important, a high standard of honor was insisted upon.

There was one thing a boy could not do at Bingham and remain in the school; that was to cheat in classrooms or at examinations. For this offense no second chance was given. "I cannot argue the subject," Page quotes Colonel Bingham saying to the distracted parent

whose son had been dismissed on this charge, and who was begging for his reinstatement. "In fact, I have no power to reinstate your boy. I could not keep the honor of the school—I could not even keep the boys if he were to return. They would appeal to their parents and most of them would be called home. They are the flower of the South, sir!" And the social standards that controlled the thinking of the South for so many years after the war were strongly entrenched.

"The son of a Confederate general," Page writes, "if he were at all a decent fellow, had, of course, a higher social rank at the Bingham School than the son of a colonel. There was some difficulty in deciding the exact rank of a judge or a governor, as a father; but the son of a preacher had a fair chance of a good social rating, especially of an Episcopalian clergyman. A Presbyterian preacher came next in rank. I at first was at a social disadvantage. My father had been a Methodist—that was bad enough; but he had had no military title at all. If it had become known among the boys that he had been a 'Union man'—I used to shudder at the suspicion in which I should be held. And the fact that my father had held no military title did at last become known!"

At Bingham Page gained his first knowledge of Greek, Latin, and mathematics, and he was an outstanding student in all three subjects. He had no particular liking for mathematics, but he could never understand why anyone should find this branch of learning difficult; he mastered it with the utmost ease and always stood high. In two or three years he had absorbed everything that Bingham could offer and was ready for the next step.

Page spent something more than a year at Trinity

College, entering in the autumn of 1871, and leaving in December, 1872. A few letters, written from this place, are scarcely complimentary. They show that the young man was very unhappy. One long letter to his mother is nothing but a boyish diatribe against the place. "I do not care a horse apple for Trinity's distinction," he writes, and then he gives the reason for this juvenile contempt. His first report, he says, will soon reach home; he warns his mother that it will be unfavorable, and he explains that this bad showing is the result of a deliberate plot. The boys who obtain high marks, Page declares, secure them usually by cheating or through the partisanship of the professors; a high grade therefore really means that the recipient is either a humbug or a bootlicker. Page had therefore attempted to keep his reputation unsullied by aiming at a low academical record! The report on that three months' work, which still survives, discloses that Page's conspiracy against himself did not succeed, for his marks are all high. "Be sure to send him back" is the annotation on this document, indicating that Page had made a better impression on Trinity than Trinity had made on Page.

But the rebellious young man did not return. After Christmas, 1872, his schoolboy letters reveal him at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Va. Here the atmosphere was of a somewhat more genial type. "It was at Ashland that I first began to unfold," said Page afterward. "Dear old Ashland!" Dr. Duncan, the President, was a clergyman whose pulpit oratory is still a tradition in the South, but, in addition to his religious exaltation, he was an exceedingly lovable, companionable, and stimulating human being.

In many ways young Page was the life of the under-

graduate body. A passing desire for an immediate theological campaign was merely that passion for doing things and for self-expression which were always conspicuous traits. His intense ambition as a boy is still remembered in this sleepy little village. He read every book in the sparse college library; he talked to his college mates and his professors on every imaginable subject; he led his associates in the miniature parliament —the Franklin Debating Society—to which he belonged; he wrote prose and verse at an astonishing rate; he explored the country for miles around, making frequent pilgrimages to the birthplace of Henry Clay, which is the chief historical glory of Ashland, and to that Hanover Court House which was the scene of the oratorical triumph of Patrick Henry; he flirted with the pretty girls in the village, and even had two half-serious love affairs in rapid succession; he slept upon a hard mattress at night and imbibed more than the usual allotment of Greek, Latin, and mathematics in the daytime.

One year he captured the Greek prize and the next the Sutherlin medal for oratory. With a fellow classicist he entered into a solemn compact to hold all their conversation, even on the most trivial tropics, in Latin, with heavy penalties for careless lapses into English. The experiment at least had a certain influence in improving the young man's Latinity. Another favorite dissipation was that of translating English masterpieces into the ancient tongue; there still survives among Page's early papers a copy of Bryant's "Waterfowl" done into Latin iambics. As to Page's personal appearance, a designation coined by a fellow student who afterward became a famous editor gives the suggestion of a portrait. He called him one of

the "seven slabs" of the college. And, as always, the adjectives which his contemporaries chiefly use in describing Page are "alert" and "positive."

But Randolph-Macon did one great thing for Page. Like many small struggling Southern colleges it managed to assemble several instructors of real mental distinction. And at the time of Page's undergraduate life it possessed at least one great teacher. This was Thomas R. Price, afterward Professor of Greek at the University of Virginia and Professor of English at Columbia University in New York. Professor Price took one forward step that has given him a permanent fame in the history of Southern education. He found that the greatest stumbling block to teaching Greek was the fact that his hopeful charges were not sufficiently familiar with their mother tongue. The prayer that was always on Price's lips, and the one with which he made his boys most familiar, was that of a wise old Greek: "O Great Apollo, send down the reviving rain upon our fields; preserve our flocks; ward off our enemies; and—build up our speech!" "It is irrational," he said, "absurd, almost criminal, to expect a young man, whose knowledge of English words and construction is scant and inexact, to put into English a difficult thought of Plato or an involved period of Cicero."

To-day every great American educational institution has vast resources for teaching English literature; even in 1876, most American universities had their professors of English; but Price insisted on placing English on exactly the same footing as Greek and Latin. He himself became head of the new English school at Randolph-Macon; and Page himself at once became the favorite pupil. This distinguished scholar—a fine figure with an imperial beard that

suggested the Confederate officer—used to have Page to tea at least twice a week and at these meetings the young man was first introduced in an understanding way to Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and the other writers who became the literary passions of his maturer life.

And Price did even more for Page; he passed him on to another place and to another teacher who extended his horizon. Up to the autumn of 1876 Page had never gone farther North than Ashland; he was still a Southern boy, speaking with the Southern drawl, living exclusively the thoughts and even the prejudices of the South. His family's broad-minded attitude had prevented him from acquiring a too restricted view of certain problems that were then vexing both sections of the country; however, his outlook was still a limited one, as his youthful correspondence shows. But in October of the centennial year a great prospect opened before him.

Two or three years previously an eccentric merchant named Johns Hopkins had died, leaving the larger part of his fortune to found a college or university in Baltimore to which only those American boys who had displayed exceptional promise should be admitted. Part of the university funds should be used to pay the expenses of twenty young men who, in undergraduate work at other colleges, stood head and shoulders above their contemporaries. The bringing together of selected teachers and selected students, two sets of brains for graduate study, would constitute the new university. A few rooms in the nearest dwelling house would suffice for headquarters. Dr. Gilman's scheme was approved; he became President on these terms; he gathered his faculty not only in the United

States but in England, and he collected his first body of students, especially his first twenty fellows, with the same minute care.

It seems almost a miracle that an inexperienced youth in a little Methodist college in Virginia should have been chosen as one of these first twenty fellows, and it is a sufficient tribute to the impression that Page must have made upon all who met him that he should have won this great academic distinction. He was only twenty-one at the time—the youngest of a group nearly every member of which became distinguished in after life. He won a Fellowship in Greek. This in itself was a great good fortune; even greater was the fact that his new life brought him into immediate contact with Professor Gildersleeve, a scholar of great genius and lovableness.

The atmosphere of Johns Hopkins was quite different from anything which the young man had previously known. "Gentlemen, you must light your own torch," was the admonition of President Gilman, in his welcoming address to his twenty fellows; intellectual independence, freedom from the trammels of tradition, were thus to be the directing ideas. One of Page's associates was Josiah Royce, who afterward had a distinguished career in philosophy at Harvard. "The beginnings of Johns Hopkins," he afterward wrote, "was a dawn wherein it was bliss to be alive. The air was full of noteworthy work done by the older men of the place and of hopes that one might find a way to get a little working power one's self. One longed to be a doer of the word, not a hearer only, a creator of his own infinitesimal fraction of the product, bound in God's name to produce when the time came."

A choice group of five aspiring Grecians, of whom

Page was one, periodically gathered around a long pine table in a second-story room of an old dwelling house on Howard Street, with Professor Gildersleeve at the head. The process of teaching was thus the intimate contact of mind with mind. Here in the course of nearly two years' residence, Page was led by Professor Gildersleeve into the closest communion with the great minds of the ancient world and gained that intimate knowledge of their written word which was the basis of his mental equipment.

But the truth is that the world was tugging at Page more insistently than the cloister. "Speaking grammatically," writes E. G. Sihler, one of Page's fellow students of that time, "Page was interested in that one of the main tenses which we call the Present." In his after life, amid all the excitements of journalism, Page could take a brief vacation and spend it with Ulysses by the sea; but actuality and human activity charmed him even more than did the heroes of the ancient world. He went somewhat into Baltimore society, but not extensively; he joined a club whose membership comprised the leading intellectual men of the town; probably his most congenial associations, however, came of the Saturday night meetings of the fellows in Hopkins Hall, where they passed in review all the questions of the day.

Page was still the Southern boy, with the strange notions about the North and Northern people which were the inheritance of many years' misunderstandings. He writes of one fellow student to whom he had taken a liking. "He is that rare thing," he says, "a Yankee Christian gentleman." He particularly dislikes one of his instructors, but, as he explains, "he is a native of Connecticut, and Connecticut, I suppose, is capable of producing any unholy human phenom-

enon." Speaking of a beautiful and well-mannered Greek girl whom he had met, he writes: "The little creature might be taken for a Southern girl, but never for a Yankee. She has an easy manner and even an air of gentility about her that doesn't appear north of Mason and Dixon's Line. Indeed, however much the Southern race (I say race intentionally) however much the Southern race owes its strength to Anglo-Saxon blood, it owes its beauty and gracefulness to the Southern climate and culture." This sort of thing is especially entertaining in the youthful Page, for it is precisely against this kind of complacency that, as a mature man, he directed his choicest ridicule. As an editor and writer his energies were devoted to reconciling North and South, and Johns Hopkins itself had much to do with opening his eyes. Its young men and its professors were gathered from all parts of the country; a student, if his mind was awake, learned more than Greek and mathematics; he learned much about that far-flung nation known as the United States.

CHAPTER II

JOURNALISM

THE five years from 1878 to 1883 Page spent in various places, engaged, for the larger part of the time, in several kinds of journalistic work. It was his period of struggle and of preparation. In the autumn of 1878 he went to Louisville, Kentucky, and presently found an occupation in this progressive city which proved absorbing. A few months before his arrival certain energetic spirits had founded a weekly paper, the *Age*, a journal which, they hoped, would fill the place in the Southern States which the very successful New York *Nation*, under the editorship of Godkin, was then occupying in the North. Page at once began contributing leading articles on literary and political topics to this publication; the work proved so congenial that he purchased—on notes—a controlling interest in the new venture and became its directing spirit.

The *Age* was in every way a worthy enterprise; in the dignity of its makeup and the high literary standards at which it aimed it imitated the London *Spectator*. Perhaps Page obtained a thousand dollars' worth of fun out of his investment; if so, that represented his entire profit. He now learned a lesson which was emphasized in his after career as editor and publisher, and that was that the Southern States provided a poor market for books or periodicals. The net result of the proceeding was that, at the age

of twenty-three, he found himself out of a job and considerably in debt.

He has himself rapidly sketched his varied activities of the next five years:

"After trying in vain," he writes, "to get work to do on any newspaper in North Carolina, I advertised for a job in journalism—any sort of a job. By a queer accident—a fortunate one for me—the owner of the St. Joseph, Missouri, *Gazette,* answered the advertisement. Why he did it, I never found out. He was in the same sort of desperate need of a newspaper man as I was in desperate need of a job. I knew nothing about him: he knew nothing about me. I knew nothing about newspaper work. I borrowed $50 and set out to St. Joe, Missouri, where I didn't know a human being. I became a reporter.

"At first I reported the price of cattle—went to the stockyards, etc. My salary came near to paying my board and lodging, but it didn't quite do it. But I had a good time in St. Joe for somewhat more than a year. There were interesting people there. I came to know something about Western life. Kansas was across the river. I often went there. I came to know Kansas City, St. Louis—a good deal of the West. After a while I was made editor of the paper. What a rousing political campaign or two we had! Then—I had done that kind of a job as long as I cared to. Every swashbuckling campaign is like every other one. Why do two? Besides, I knew my trade. I had done everything on a daily paper from stockyard reports to political editorials and heavy literary articles. In the meantime I had written several magazine articles and done other such jobs. I got leave of absence for a month or two. I wrote to several of the principal papers in Chicago, New York, and

Boston and told them that I was going down South to make political and social studies and that I was going to send them my letters. I hoped they'd publish them.

"That's all I could say. I could make no engagement; they didn't know me. I didn't even ask for an engagement. I told them simply this: that I'd write letters and send them; and I prayed heaven that they'd print them and pay for them. Then off I went with my little money in my pocket—about enough to get to New Orleans. I traveled and I wrote. I went all over the South. I sent letters and letters and letters. All the papers published all that I sent them and I was rolling in wealth! I had money in my pocket for the first time in my life. Then I went back to St. Joe and resigned; for the (old) New York *World* had asked me to go to the Atlanta Exposition as a correspondent. I went. I wrote and kept writing. How kind Henry Grady was to me! But at last the Exposition ended. I was out of a job. I applied to the *Constitution.* No, they wouldn't have me. I never got a job in my life that I asked for! But all my life better jobs have been given me than I dared ask for.

"Well—I was at the end of my rope in Atlanta and I was trying to make a living in any honest way I could when one day a telegram came from the New York *World* (it was the old *World,* which was one of the best of the dailies in its literary quality) asking me to come to New York. I had never seen a man on the paper—had never been in New York except for a day when I landed there on a return voyage from a European trip that I took during one vacation when I was in the University. Then I went to New York straight and quickly. I had an interesting experience

on the old *World*, writing literary matter chiefly, an editorial now and then, and I was frequently sent as a correspondent on interesting errands. I traveled all over the country with the Tariff Commission. I spent one winter in Washington as a sort of editorial correspondent while the tariff bill was going through Congress. Then, one day, the *World* was sold to Mr. Pulitzer and all the staff resigned."

What better training could a journalist ask for than this? Page was only twenty-eight when these five years came to an end. Merely from the standpoint of geography, his achievement had been an important one; how many Americans, at the age of twenty-eight, have such an extensive mileage to their credit? Page had spent his childhood in North Carolina; he had passed his youth in Virginia and Maryland; before he was twenty-three he had lived several months in Germany, and, on his return voyage, he had sailed by the white cliffs of England, and, from the deck of his steamer, had caught glimpses of that Isle of Wight which then held his youthful favorite, Tennyson. He had added to these experiences a winter in Kentucky and a sojourn of nearly two years in Missouri. His Southern trip, to which Page refers in the above, had taken him through Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana; he had visited the West again in 1882, spending a considerable time in all the large cities, Chicago, Omaha, Denver, Leadville, Salt Lake, and from the latter point he had traveled extensively through Mormondom.

The several months spent in Atlanta had given the young correspondent a glimpse into the new South, for this energetic city embodied a Southern spirit that was several decades removed from the Civil War. After this came nearly two years in New York and

Washington, where Page gained his first insight into Federal politics; in particular, as a correspondent attached to the Tariff Commission—an assignment that again started him on his travels to industrial centers—he came into contact, for the first time, with the mechanism of framing the great American tariff.

During this period Page was not only forming a first-hand acquaintance with the passing scene, but also with important actors in it. The mere fact that, on the St. Joseph *Gazette*, he succeeded Eugene Field—"A good fellow named Page is going to take my desk," said the careless poet. "I hope he will succeed to my debts too"—always remained a pleasant memory. He entered zealously into the life of this active community; his love of talk and disputation, his interest in politics, his hearty laugh, his vigorous handclasp, his animation of body and of spirit, and his sunny outlook on men and events—these are the traits that his old friends in this town, some of whom still survive, associate with the juvenile editor.

In his Southern trip Page called—self-invited—upon Jefferson Davis and was cordially received. At Atlanta, as he records above, he made friends with that chivalric champion of a resurrected South, Henry Grady; here also he obtained fugitive glimpses of a struggling and briefless lawyer, who, like Page, was interested more in books and writing than in the humdrum of professional life, and who was then engaged in putting together a brochure on *Congressional Government* which immediately gave him a national standing. The name of this sympathetic acquaintance was Woodrow Wilson.

Another important event had taken place, for, at St. Louis, on November 15, 1880, Page had married Miss Willia Alice Wilson. Miss Wilson was the daughter

of a Scotch physician, Dr. William Wilson, who had settled in Michigan, near Detroit, in 1832. When she was a small child she went with her sister's family —her father had died seven years before—to North Carolina, near Cary; and she and Page had been childhood friends and schoolmates. At the time of the wedding, Page was editor of the St. Joseph *Gazette*; the fact that he had attained this position, five months after starting at the bottom, sufficiently discloses his aptitude for journalistic work.

Page had now outgrown any Southern particularism with which he may have started life. He no longer found his country exclusively in the area south of the Potomac; he had made his own the West, the North—New York, Chicago, Denver, as well as Atlanta and Raleigh. It is worth while insisting on this fact, for the cultivation of a wide-sweeping Americanism and a profound faith in democracy became the qualities that will loom most largely in his career from this time forward. It is necessary only to read the newspaper letters which he wrote on his Southern trip in 1881 to understand how early his mind seized this new point of view.

Many things which now fell under his observant eye in the Southern States greatly irritated him and with his characteristic impulsiveness he pictured these traits in pungent phrase. The atmosphere of shiftlessness that too generally prevailed in some localities; the gangs of tobacco-chewing loafers assembled around railway stations; the listless Negroes that seemed to overhang the whole country like a black cloud; the plantation mansions in a sad state of disrepair; the old unoccupied slave huts overgrown with weeds; the unpainted and broken-down fences; the rich soil that was crudely and wastefully cultivated with a single

crop—the youthful social philosopher found himself comparing these vestigia of a half-moribund civilization with the vibrant cities of the North, the beautiful white and green villages of New England, and the fertile prairie farms of the West. "Even the dogs," he said, "look old-fashioned." Oh, for a change in his beloved South—a change of almost any kind! "Even a heresy, if it be bright and fresh, would be a relief. You feel as if you wished to see some kind of an effort put forth, a discussion, a fight, a runaway, anything to make the blood go faster."

Wherever Page saw signs of a new spirit—and he saw many—he recorded them with an eagerness which showed his loyalty to the section of his birth. The splitting up of great plantations into small farms he put down as one of the indications of a new day. A growing tendency to educate, not only the white child, but the Negro, inspired a similar tribute. But he rejoiced most over the decreasing bitterness of the masses over the memories of the Civil War, and discovered, with satisfaction, that any remaining ill feeling was a heritage left not by the Union soldier, but by the carpetbagger.

Page went south for a short visit after resigning his place on the New York *World,* and several admirers in Raleigh persuaded him to found a new paper, which should devote itself to exerting an influence on the development of a new Southern spirit. No task could have been more grateful to him and there was no place in which he would have better liked to undertake it than in the old state which he loved so well. The result was the *State Chronicle* of Raleigh, practically a new paper, which for a year and a half proved to be the most refreshing influence that North Carolina had known in many a year. Necessarily Page found him-

self in conflict with his environment. He had little interest in the things that then chiefly interested the state, and North Carolina apparently had little interest in the things that chiefly occupied the mind of the youthful journalist. Page was interested in the reform of the civil service; the Democrats of North Carolina were especially hostile to the belief that service to a party did not in itself establish a qualification for public office. Page was interested in uplifting the common people, in helping every farmer to own his own acres, and in teaching the most modern and scientific way of cultivating them; he was interested in giving every boy and girl at least an elementary education, and in giving a university training to such as had the aptitude and the ambition to obtain it; he believed in industrial training—and in these things the North Carolina of those days had little concern. Page even went so far as to take an open stand for the pitiably neglected black man: he insisted that he should be taught to read and write, and instructed in agriculture and the manual trades.

A man who advocated such revolutionary things in those days was accused—and Page was so accused—of attempting to promote the "social equality" of the two races. Page also declaimed in favor of developing the state industrially; he called attention to the absurdity of sending Southern cotton to New England spinning mills, and he pointed out the boundless but unworked natural resources of the state, in minerals, forests, waterpower, and lands.

North Carolina, he informed his astonished compatriots, had once been a great manufacturing colony; why could the state not become one again? But the matter in which the buoyant editor and his constituents

found themselves most at variance was the spirit that controlled North Carolina life. It was a spirit that found comfort for its present poverty and lack of progress in a backward look at the greatness of the state in the past and the achievements of its sons in the Civil War. Though Page believed that the Confederacy had been a ghastly error, and though he abhorred the institution of slavery and attributed to it all the woes, economic and social, from which his section suffered, he rendered that homage to the soldiers of the South which is the due of brave, self-sacrificing and conscientious men; yet he taught that progress lay in regarding the four dreadful years of the Civil War as the closed chapter of an unhappy and mistaken history and in hastening the day when the South should resume its place as a living part of the great American democracy. All manifestations of a contrary spirit he ridiculed in language which was extremely readable but which at times outraged the good conservative people whom he was attempting to convert.

Altogether it was a piquant period in Page's life. He found that he had suddenly become a "traitor" to his country and that his experiences in the North had completely "Yankeeized" him. Even in more mature days, Page's pen had its javelin-like quality; and in 1884, possessed as he was of all the fury of youth, he never hesitated to return every blow that was rained upon his head. As a matter of fact he had a highly enjoyable time. The *State Chronicle* during his editorship is one of the most cherished recollections of older North Carolinians to-day. Even those who hurled the liveliest epithets in his direction have long since accepted the ideas for which Page was then con-

tending; "the only trouble with him," they now ruefully admit, "was that he was forty years ahead of his time."

One editorial is joyfully recalled, in which Page referred to a public officer who was distinguished for his dignity and his family tree, but not noted for any animated administration of his duties, as "Thothmes II." When this bewildered functionary searched the Encyclopædia and learned that "Thothmes II" was an Egyptian king of the XVIIIth dynasty, whose desiccated mummy had recently been disinterred from the hot sands of the desert, he naturally stopped his subscription to the paper. The metaphor apparently tickled Page, for he used it in a series of articles which have become immortal in the political annals of North Carolina. These have always been known as the "Mummy letters." They furnished a vivid but rather aggravating explanation for the existing backwardness and chauvinism of the commonwealth. All the trouble, it seems, was caused by the "mummies." "It is an awfully discouraging business," Page wrote, "to undertake to prove to a mummy that it is a mummy. You go up to it and say, 'Old fellow, the Egyptian dynasties crumbled several thousand years ago: you are a fish out of water. You have by accident or the Providence of God got a long way out of your time. This is America.' The old thing grins that grin which death set on its solemn features when the world was young; and your task is so pitiful that even the humor of it is gone. Give it up." His liveliness of spirits, his mental and physical vitality, the constant sparkle of his talk, the sharp edge of his humor, naturally drew the younger men to his side. The result was the organization of the Wautauga Club, a gathering which held monthly meetings for the discussion of ways and

means of improving social and educational conditions in North Carolina.

The Wautauga Club had a brief existence of a little more than two years, the period practically covering Page's residence in the state; but its influence is an important fact at the present time. It gave the state ideas that afterward caused something like a revolution in its economic and educational status. The noblest monument to its labors is the State College in Raleigh, an institution which now has more than a thousand students, for the most part studying the mechanic arts and scientific agriculture.

To this one college most North Carolinians to-day attribute the fact that their state in appreciable measure is realizing its great economic and industrial opportunities. From it in the last thirty years thousands of young men have gone: in all sections of the commonwealth they have caused the almost barren acres to yield fertile and diversified crops; they have planted everywhere new industries; they have unfolded unsuspected resources and everywhere created wealth and spread enlightenment. This institution is a direct outcome of Page's brief sojourn in his native state nearly forty years ago. The idea originated in his brain; the files of the *State Chronicle* tell the story of his struggle in its behalf; the activities of the Wautauga Club were largely concentrated upon securing its establishment.

The State College was a great victory for Page, but final success did not come until three years after he had left the state. For a year and a half of hard newspaper work convinced Page that North Carolina really had no permanent place for him. The *Chronicle* was editorially a success: Page's articles were widely quoted, not only in his own state but in New England

and other parts of the Union. He succeeded in stirring up North Carolina and the South generally, but popular support for the *Chronicle* was not forthcoming in sufficient amount to make the paper a commercial possibility. Reluctantly and sadly Page had to forego his hope of playing an active part in rescuing his state from the disasters of the Civil War. Late in the summer of 1885, he again left for the North, which now became his permanent home.

And with this second sojourn in New York Page's opportunity came. The first two years he spent in newspaper work, for the most part with the *Evening Post*, but, one day in November, 1887, a man whom he had never seen came into his office and unfolded a new opportunity. Two years before a rather miscellaneous group had launched an ambitious literary undertaking. This was a monthly periodical, which, it was hoped, would do for the United States what such publications as the *Fortnightly* and the *Contemporary* were doing for England. The magazine was to have the highest literary quality and to be sufficiently dignified to attract the finest minds in America as contributors; its purpose was to exercise a profound influence in politics, literature, science, and art. The projectors had selected for this publication a title that was almost perfection—the *Forum*—but this, after nearly two years' experimentation, represented about the limit of their achievement. The *Forum* had hardly made an impression on public thought and had attracted very few readers, although it had lost large sums of money for its progenitors. These public-spirited gentlemen now turned to Page as the man who might rescue them from their dilemma and achieve their purpose. He accepted the engagement, first as manager and presently as editor, and remained

the guiding spirit of the *Forum* for eight years, until the summer of 1895.

Page, indeed, represented a new type of editor. Up to that time this functionary had been a rather solemn, inaccessible high priest; he sat secluded in his sanctuary, and weeded out from the mass of manuscripts dumped upon his desk the particular selections which seemed to be most suited to his purpose. To solicit contributions would have seemed an entirely undignified proceeding; in all cases contributors must come to him. According to Page, however, "an editor must know men and be out among men." His system of "making up" the magazine at first somewhat astounded his associates. A month or two in advance of publication day he would draw up his table of contents. This, in its preliminary stage, amounted to nothing except a list of the main subjects which he aspired to handle in that number. It was a hope, not a performance. The subjects were commonly suggested by the happenings of the time—an especially outrageous lynching, the trial of a clergyman for heresy, a new attack upon the Monroe Doctrine, the discovery of a new substance such as radium, the publication of an epoch-making book. Page would then fix upon the inevitable men who could write most readably and most authoritatively upon these topics, and "go after" them.

Sometimes he would write one of his matchless editorial letters; at other times he would make a personal visit; if necessary, he would use any available friends in a wire-pulling campaign. At all odds he must "get" his man; once he had fixed upon a certain contributor nothing could divert him from the chase. Nor did the negotiations cease after he had "landed" his quarry. He had his way of discussing the subject with his proposed writer, and he discussed it from every possible

point of view. He would take him to lunch or to dinner; in his quiet way he would draw him out, find whether he really knew much about the subject, learn the attitude that he was likely to take, and delicately slip in suggestions of his own.

Page was no mere chaser of names; there was nothing of the literary tuft-hunter about his editorial methods. He liked to see such men as Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, William Graham Sumner, Charles W. Eliot, Frederic Harrison, Paul Bourget, and the like upon his title page—and here these and many other similarly distinguished authors appeared—but the greatest name could not attain a place there if the letter press that followed were unworthy. Indeed Page's habit of throwing out the contributions of the great, after paying a stiff price for them, caused much perturbation in his counting room. One day he called in one of his associates.

"Do you see that waste basket?" he asked, pointing to a large receptacle filled to overflowing with manuscripts. "All our Cleveland articles are there!"

He had gone to great trouble and expense to obtain a series of six articles from the most prominent publicists and political leaders of the country on the first year of Mr. Cleveland's second administration. It was to be the "feature" of the number then in preparation.

"There isn't one of them," he declared, "who has got the point. I have thrown them all away and I am going to try to write something myself."

And he spent a day or two turning out an article which aroused great public interest. When Page commissioned an article, he meant simply that he would pay full price for it; whether he would publish it depended entirely upon the quality of the ma-

terial itself. But Page was just as severe upon his own writings as upon those of other men. He wrote occasionally—always under a nom-de-plume; but he had great difficulty in satisfying his own editorial standards. After finishing an article he would commonly send for one of his friends and read the result.

"That is superb!" this admiring associate would sometimes say.

In response Page would take the manuscript and, holding it aloft in two hands, tear it into several bits, and throw the scraps into the waste basket.

"Oh, I can do better than that," he would laugh and in another minute he was busy rewriting the article, from beginning to end.

The *Forum* had established Page's reputation as an editor, and the competition for his services was lively. The distinguished Boston publishing house of Houghton, Mifflin & Company immediately invited him to become a part of their organization. When Horace E. Scudder, in 1898, resigned the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Page succeeded him. Thus Page became the successor of James Russell Lowell, James T. Fields, William D. Howells, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich as the head of this famous periodical. This meant that he had reached the top of his profession. He was now forty-three years old.

No American publication had ever had so brilliant a history. Founded in 1857, in the most flourishing period of the New England writers, its pages had first published many of the best essays of Emerson, the second series of the Biglow papers as well as many other of Lowell's writings, poems of Longfellow and Whittier, such great successes as Holmes's "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," Mrs. Howe's

"Battle Hymn of the Republic," and the early novels of Henry James. If America had a literature, the *Atlantic* was certainly its most successful periodical exponent. Yet, in a sense, the *Atlantic,* by the time Page succeeded to the editorship, had become the victim of its dazzling past.

When Page made his first appearance in the *Atlantic* office, the magazine was unquestionably on the decline. Its literary quality was still high; the momentum that its great contributors had given it was still keeping the publication alive; entrance into its columns still represented the ultimate ambition of the aspiring American writer; but it needed a new spirit to insure its future. What it required was the kind of editing that had suddenly made the *Forum* one of the greatest of English-written reviews. This is the reason why the canny Yankee proprietors had reached over to New York and grasped Page as quickly as the capitalists of the *Forum* let him slip between their fingers.

Page's sense of humor discovered a certain ironic aspect in his position as the dictator of this famous New England magazine. The fact that his manner was impatiently energetic and somewhat startling to the placid atmosphere of Park Street was not the thing that really signified its break with its past. But here was a Southerner firmly entrenched in a headquarters that had long been sacred to the New England abolitionists. Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, the present editor of the *Atlantic,* has described the somewhat disconcerting descent of Page upon the editorial sanctuary of James Russell Lowell:

"Were a visitant from another sphere to ask me for the incarnation of those qualities we love to call American, I should turn to a familiar gallery of my

memory and point to the living portrait that hangs there of Walter Page. A sort of foursquareness, bluntness, it seemed to some; an uneasy, often explosive energy; a disposition to underrate fine-drawn nicenesses of all sorts; ingrained Yankee common sense, checking his vaulting enthusiasm; enormous self-confidence, impatience of failure—all of these were in him; and he was besides affectionate to a fault, devoted to his country, his family, his craft—a strong, bluff, tender man. . . .

"Page's coming marked the end of small ways. His first requirement was, in lieu of a desk, a table that might have served a family of twelve for Thanksgiving dinner. No one could imagine what that vast, polished tableland could serve for until they watched the editor at work. Then they saw. Order vanished and chaos reigned. Huge piles of papers, letters, articles, reports, books, pamphlets, magazines, congregated themselves as if by magic. To work in such confusion seemed hopeless, but Page eluded the congestion by the simple expedient of moving on. He would light a fresh cigar, give the editorial chair a hitch, and begin his work in front of a fresh expanse of table, with no clutter of the past to disturb the new day's litter.

"The motive power of his work was enthusiasm. Never was more generous welcome given to a newcomer than Page held out to the successful manuscript of an unknown. I remember, though I heard the news second hand at the time, what a day it was in the office when the first manuscript from the future author of 'To Have and To Hold,' came in from an untried Southern girl. He walked up and down, reading paragraphs aloud and slapping the crisp manuscript to enforce his commendation. To take a

humbler instance, I recall the words of over generous praise with which he greeted the first paper I ever sent to an editor quite as clearly as I remember the monstrous effort which had brought it into being. Sometimes he would do a favored manuscript the honor of taking it out to lunch in his coat-pocket, and an associate vividly recalls eggs, coffee, and pie in a near-by restaurant, while, in a voice that could be heard by the remotest lunchers, Page read passages which many of them were too startled to appreciate. He was not given to overrating, but it was not in his nature to understate. 'I tell you,' said he, grumbling over some unfortunate proof sheets from Manhattan, 'there isn't one man in New York who can write English—not from the Battery to Harlem Heights.' And if the faults were moral rather than literary, his disapproval grew in emphasis. There is more than tradition in the tale of the Negro who, presuming on Page's deep interest in his race, brought to his desk a manuscript copied word for word from a published source. Page recognized the deception, and seizing the rascal's collar with a firm editorial grip, rejected the poem, and ejected the poet, with an energy very invigorating to the ancient serenities of the office.

"Page was always effervescent with ideas. Like an editor who would have made a good fisherman, he used to say that you had to cast a dozen times before you could get a strike. He was forever in those days sending out ideas and suggestions and invitations to write. The result was electric, and the magazine became with a suddenness (of which only an editor can appreciate the wonder) a storehouse of animating thoughts. He avoided the mistake common to our craft of editing a magazine for the immediate

satisfaction of his colleagues. 'Don't write for the office,' he would say. 'Write for outside,' and so his magazine became a living thing. His phrase suggests one special gift that Page had, for which his profession should do him especial honor. He was able, quite beyond the powers of any man of my acquaintance, to put compendiously into words the secrets of successful editing. It was capital training just to hear him talk. 'Never save a feature,' he used to say. 'Always work for the next number. Forget the others. Spend everything just on that.' And to those who know, there is divination in the principle. Again he understood instinctively that to write well a man must not only have something to say, but must long to say it. . . .

"Page was generous in his coöperation. He never drew a rigid line about his share in any enterprise, but gave and took help with each and all. A lover of good English, with an honest passion for things tersely said, Page esteemed good journalism far above any second-rate manifestation of more pretentious forms; but many of us will regret that he was not privileged to find some outlet for his energies in which aspiration for real literature might have played an ampler part. For the literature of the past Page had great respect, but his interest was ever in the present and the future. He was forever fulminating against bad writing, and hated the ignorant and slipshod work of the hack almost as much as he despised the sham of the man who affected letters, the dabbler and the poet-aster. His taste was for the roast beef of literature, not for the side dishes and the trimmings, and his appreciation of the substantial work of others was no surer than his instinct for his own performance. He was an admirable

writer of exposition, argument, and narrative—solid and thoughtful, but never dull. . . . I came into close relations with him and from him I learned more of my profession than from anyone I have ever known. Scores of other men would say the same."

Page's most independent stroke in his *Atlantic* days came with the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. Boston was then the headquarters of a national mood which has almost passed out of popular remembrance. Its spokesmen called themselves anti-imperialists. The theory back of their protest was that the American declaration of war on Spain was not only the wanton attack of a great bully upon a feeble little country: it was something that was bound to have deplorable consequences. The United States was breaking with its past and engaging in European quarrels; as a consequence of the war it would acquire territories and embark on a career of "imperialism."

At all such twaddle Page was impatient. He declared that the Spanish War was a "necessary act of surgery for the health of civilization." He did not believe that a nation, simply because it was small, should be permitted to maintain indefinitely a human slaughter house at the door of the United States. The *Atlantic* for June, 1898, gave the so-called anti-imperialists a thrill of horror. On the cover appeared the defiantly flying American flag; the first article was a vigorous and approving presentation of the American case against Spain; though this was unsigned, its incisive style at once betrayed the author. The *Atlantic* had printed the American flag on its cover during the Civil War; but certain New Englanders thought that this latest struggle, in its motives and its proportions, was hardly entitled to the

distinction. Page declared, however, that the Spanish War marked a new period in history; and he endorsed the McKinley Administration, not only in the war itself, but in its consequences, particularly the annexation of the Philippine Islands.

Page greatly enjoyed life in Boston and Cambridge. The *Atlantic* was rapidly growing in circulation and in influence, and the new friends that its editor was making were especially to his taste. He now had a family of four children, three boys and one girl—and their bringing up and education, as he said at this time, constituted his real occupation. So far as he could see, in the summer of 1899, he was permanently established in life. But larger events in the publishing world now again pulled him back to New York, where he joined forces with Mr. Frank N. Doubleday and founded the firm of Doubleday, Page & Company. Page now had the opportunity which he had long wished for; the mere editing of magazines, even magazines of such an eminent character as the *Forum* and the *Atlantic Monthly,* could hardly satisfy his ambition; he yearned to possess something which he could call his own, at least in part.

The life of an editor has its unsatisfactory aspect, unless the editor himself has an influential ownership in his periodical. Page now found his opportunity to establish a monthly magazine which he could regard as his own in both senses. He was its untrammeled editor, and also, in part, its proprietor. All editors and writers will sympathize with the ideas expressed in a letter written about this time to Page's friend, Mr. William Roscoe Thayer.

When the first number of the *World's Work* appeared Mr. Thayer wrote, expressing a slight disap-

pointment that it was more popular in character than the publications with which Page had previously been associated. Page met this challenge in his usual hearty fashion.

To William Roscoe Thayer

34 Union Square East, New York,
December 5, 1900.

My dear Thayer:

The *World's Work* has brought me nothing so good as your letter of yesterday. When Mrs. Page read it, she shouted, "Now that's it!" For "it" read "truth," and you will have her meaning and mine. My thanks you may be sure you have, in great and earnest abundance.

You surprise me in two ways—(1) that you think as well of the magazine as you do. If it have half the force and earnestness that you say it has, how happy I shall be, for then it will surely bring something to pass. The other way in which you surprise me is by the flattering things that you say about my conduct of the *Atlantic*. Alas! it was not what you in your kind way say—no, no.

Of course the *World's Work* is not yet by any means what I hope to make it. But it has this incalculable advantage (to me) over every other magazine in existence: it is mine (mine and my partners', i. e., partly mine). . . . A man ought to express himself, ought to live his own life, say his own little say, before silence comes. The "say" may be bad—a mere yawp, and silence might be more becoming. But the same argument would make a man dissatisfied with his own nose if it happened to be ugly.

It's *his* nose, and he must content himself. So it's *his* yawp and he must let it go.

I'm not going to make the new magazine my own megaphone—you may be sure of that. It will nevertheless contain my general interpretation of things, in which I swear I do believe! The first thing, of course, is to establish it. Then it can be shaped more nearly into what I wish it to become. If it seem unmannerly, aggressive, I know no other way to make it heard. If it died, then the game would be up. Well, we seem to have established it at once. It promises not to cost us a penny of investment.

Now, the magazines need new topics. They have all threshed over old straw for many years. There is *one* new subject, to my thinking worth all the old ones: the new impulse in American life, the new feeling of nationality, our coming to realize ourselves. To my mind there is greater promise in democracy than men of any preceding period ever dared dream of—aggressive democracy—growth by action. Our writers (the few we have) are yet in the pre-democratic era. When men's imaginations lay hold on the things that already begin to appear above the horizon, we shall have something worth reading. At present I can do no more than bawl out, "See! here are new subjects." One of these days somebody will come along who can write about them. I have started out without a writer. Fiske is under contract, James would give nothing more to the *Atlantic,* you were ill (I thank Heaven you are no longer so), the second- and third-rate essayists have been bought by mere Wall Street publishers. Beyond these are the company of story-tellers and beyond them only a dreary waste of dead-level unimaginative men and

women. I can (soon) get all that I could ever have got in the *Atlantic* and new ones (I know they'll come) whom I could never have got there.

You'll see—within a year or two—by far a better magazine than I have ever made; and you and I will differ in nothing unless you feel despair about the breakdown of certain democratic theories, which I think were always mere theories. Let 'em go. The real thing, which is life and action, is better.

Heartily and always your grateful friend,

WALTER H. PAGE.

Thus the fact that Page's new magazine was intended for a popular audience was not the result of accident, but of design. It represented a periodical plan which had long been taking shape in Page's mind. The things that he had been doing for the *Forum* and the *Atlantic* he aspired to do for a larger audience than that to which publications of this character could appeal. Scholar though Page was, and lover of the finest things in literature that he had always been, yet this sympathy and interest had always lain with the masses. Perhaps it is impossible to make literature democratic, but Page believed that he would be genuinely serving the great cause that was nearest his heart if he could spread wide the facts of the modern world, especially the facts of America, and if he could clothe the expression in language which, while always dignified and even "literary," would still be sufficiently touched with the vital, the picturesque, and the "human," to make his new publication appeal to a wider audience of intelligent, everyday Americans.

CHAPTER III

SERVICES TO THE SOUTH

INEVITABLY the condition of the people in his own homeland enlisted Page's sympathy, for he had learned of their necessities at first hand. The need of education had powerfully impressed him even as a boy. At twenty-three he began writing articles for the Raleigh *Observer*, practically all of them pleas for the education of the Southern child. His subsequent activities of this kind, as editor of the *State Chronicle*, have already been described. The American from other parts of the country is rather shocked when he first learns of the backwardness of education in the South a generation ago. In any real sense there was no publicly supported system for training the child. A few wretched hovels, scattered through a sparsely settled country, served as schoolhouses; a few uninspiring and neglected women, earning perhaps $50 or $75 a year, did weary duty as teachers; a few groups of anemic and listless children, attending school for only forty days a year—such was the preparation for life which most Southern states gave the less fortunate of their citizens. The glaring fact that emphasized the outcome of this official carelessness was an illiteracy, among white men and women, of 26 per cent. Among the Negroes it was vastly larger.

The first exhortation to reform came from the Wautauga Club, which Page had organized in Raleigh in 1884. After Page had left his native state, other

men began preaching the same crusade. Perhaps the greatest of those advocates whom the South loves to refer to as "educational statesmen" was Dr. Charles D. McIver, of Greensboro, N. C. McIver's personality and career had an heroic quality all their own. His great work was the State Normal College for Women, which, amid unparalleled difficulties, he founded for teaching the teachers of the new Southern generation. It was at this institution that Page, in 1897, delivered the address which gave the cause of Southern education that one thing which is worth armies to any struggling reform—a phrase; and it was a phrase that lived in the popular mind and heart and summed up, in a way that a thousand speeches could never have done, the great purpose for which the best people in the state were striving.

His editorial gift for title-making now served Page in good stead. "The Forgotten Man," which was the heading of his address, immediately passed into the common speech of the South and even at this day inevitably appears in all discussions of social progress. It was again Page's familiar message of democracy, of improving the condition of the everyday man, woman, and child; and the message, as is usually the case in all incitements to change, involved many unpleasant facts. Page had first of all to inform his fellow Southerners that it was only in the South that "The Forgotten Man" was really an out-standing feature. He did not exist in New England, in the Middle States, in the Mississippi Valley, or in the West, or existed in these regions to so slight an extent that he was not a grave menace to society.

But in the South the situation was quite different. And for this fact the explanation was found in history. The South certainly could not fix the blame upon Na

ture. In natural wealth—in forests, mines, quarries, rich soil, in the unlimited power supplied by watercourses—the Southern States formed perhaps the richest region in the country. These things North Carolina and her sister communities had not developed; more startling still, they had not developed a source of wealth that was infinitely greater than all these combined; they had not developed their men and their women.

The region which had given Thomas Jefferson and George Washington to the world was still, in the year 1897, organized upon an essentially aristocratic basis. The conception of education which prevailed in the most hide-bound aristocracies of Europe still ruled south of the Potomac. There was no acceptance of that fundamental American doctrine that education was the function of the state. It was generally regarded as the luxury of the rich and the socially high placed; it was certainly not for the poor; and it was a generally accepted view that those who enjoyed this privilege must pay for it out of their own pockets. Again Page returned to the "mummy" theme —the fact that North Carolina, and the South generally, were too much ruled by "dead men's" hands. The state was controlled by a "little aristocracy, which, in its social and economic character, made a failure and left a stubborn crop of wrong social notions behind it—especially about education."

Thus the North Carolina aristocracy had failed in education and the failure of the Church had been as complete and deplorable. The preachers had established preparatory schools for boys and girls, but these were under the control of sects; and so education was either a class or an ecclesiastical concern. "The forgotten man remained forgotten. The aristocratic

scheme of education had passed him by. To a less extent, but still to the extent of hundreds of thousands, the ecclesiastical scheme had passed him by." But even the education which these institutions gave was inferior. Page told his North Carolina audience that the University of which they were so proud did not rank with Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and other universities of the North. The state had not produced great scholars nor established great libraries. In the estimation of publishers North Carolina was unimportant as a book market. "By any test that may be made, both these systems have failed even with the classes that they appealed to." The net result was that "one in every four was wholly forgotten"—that is, was unable to read and write.

Even more tragic than these "forgotten men" were the "forgotten women." "Thin and wrinkled in youth from ill-prepared food, clad without warmth or grace, living in untidy houses, working from daylight till bedtime at the dull round of weary duties, the slaves of men of equal slovenliness, the mothers of joyless children—all uneducated if not illiterate." "This sight," Page told his hearers, "every one of you has seen, not in the countries whither we send missionaries, but in the borders of the State of North Carolina, in this year of grace."

"Our civilization," he declared, "has been a failure." Both the politicians and the preacher had failed to lift the masses. "It is a time for a wiser statesmanship and a more certain means of grace." He admitted that there had been recent progress in North Carolina, owing largely to the work of McIver and Alderman, but taxes for educational purposes were still low. What was the solution? "A public

school system generously supported by public sentiment and generously maintained by both state and local taxation, is the only effective means to develop the forgotten man and even more surely the only means to develop the forgotten woman. . . ." He advised that North Carolina commit his creed of democracy to memory and teach it to its children. It was as follows:

"I believe in the free public training of both the hands and the mind of every child born of woman.

"I believe that by the right training of men we add to the wealth of the world. All wealth is the creation of man, and he creates it only in proportion to the trained uses of the community; and the more men we train the more wealth every one may create.

"I believe in the perpetual regeneration of society, and in the immortality of democracy and in growth everlasting."

Thus Page nailed his thesis upon the door of his native state, and mighty was the reverberation. In a few weeks Page's Greensboro address had made its way all over the Southern States, and his melancholy figure, the "forgotten man," had etched itself deeply into the popular consciousness for the very good reason that its truth was pretty generally recognized. The higher type of newspaper, though it winced somewhat at Page's strictures, manfully recognized that the best way of meeting his charge was by setting to work and improving conditions. The fact is that the better conscience of North Carolina welcomed this eloquent description of unquestioned evils; but the gentlemen whom Page used to stigmatize as "professional Southerners"—the men who commercialized class and sectional prejudice to their own political and

financial or ecclesiastical profit—fell foul of this "renegade," this "Southern Yankee" who had dared to visit his old home and desecrate its traditions and its religion.

This clerical wrath was kindled into fresh flame when Page, in an editorial in his magazine, declared that these same preachers, ignoring their real duties, were content "to herd their women and children around the stagnant pools of theology." For real religion Page had the deepest reverence, and he had great respect also for the robust evangelical preachers whose efforts had contributed so much to the opening up of the frontier. In his Greenboro address Page had given these men high praise. North Carolina had many clergymen of the more progressive type; these men chuckled at Page's vigorous characterization of the brethren, but those against whom it had been aimed raged with a fervor that was almost unchristian. This clerical excitement, however, did not greatly disturb the philosophic Page. The hubbub lasted for several years, but he never publicly referred to the attacks upon him. Occasionally in letters to his friends he would good-naturedly discuss them. "I have had several letters about an 'excoriation' (Great Heavens! What a word!) that somebody in North Carolina has been giving me. I never read these things and I don't know what it's all about—nor do I care. But perhaps you'll be interested in a letter that I wrote an old friend (a lady) who is concerned about it. I enclose a copy of it. I shall never notice any 'excoriator.' But if you wish to add to the gayety of nations, give this copy to some newspaper and let it loose in the state—if you care to do so. We must have patience with these puny and peevish brethren.

They've been trained to a false view of life. Heaven knows I bear them no ill-will."

The letter to which Mr. Page referred follows:

My Dear Friend:

I have your letter saying that some of the papers in North Carolina are again "jumping on" me. I do not know which they are, and I am glad that you did not tell me. I had heard of it before. . . .

And why do you not write me about things that I really care for in the good old country—the budding trees, the pleasant weather, news of old friends, gossip of good people—cheerful things? I pray you, don't be concerned about what any poor whining soul may write about me. I don't care for myself: I care only for him; for the writer of personal abuse always suffers from it—never the man abused. . . .

These silly outbursts never reach me and they never can; and they, therefore, utterly fail, and always will fail, of their aim; yet, my dear friend, there is nevertheless a serious side to such folly. For it shows the need of education, education, education. . . .

Those who took joy in abuse of me have such a starved view of life that they cannot themselves, perhaps, ever be educated into kindliness and dignity of thought. But their children may be—must be. . . . There is no way to lift up life that is on so low a level except by the free education of all the people. Let us work for that and, when the growlers are done growling and forgotten, better men will remember us with gratitude. . . .

Meantime let us live and work for things nobler than any controversies, for things that are larger than the poor mission of any sect; and let us have charity

and a patient pity for those that think they serve God by abusing their fellow men. I wish I saw some way to help them to a broader and a higher life.

Faithfully yours,
WALTER H. PAGE.

That Page should have little interest in his critics at the time this letter was written—in April, 1902—was not surprising, for his educational campaign and that of his friends was now bearing fruit. The "forgotten man" and the "forgotten woman" were rapidly coming into their own. Two years after the delivery of Page's Greensboro address, a small group of educational enthusiasts met at Capon Springs, West Virginia, to discuss the general situation in the South. The leader of this gathering was Robert C. Ogden, a great New York merchant who for many years had been President of the Board of Hampton Institute. Out of this meeting grew the Southern Educational Conference, which was little more than an annual meeting for advertising broadcast the educational needs of the South. Each year Mr. Ogden chartered a railroad train; a hundred or so of the leading editors, lawyers, bankers, and the like, became his guests; the train moved through the Southern States, pausing now and then to investigate some particular institution or locality; and at some Southern city, such as Birmingham or Atlanta or Winston-Salem, a stop of several days would be made, a public building engaged, and long meetings held. In all these proceedings Page was an active figure, as he became in the Southern Education Board, which directly resulted from Mr. Ogden's public-spirited excursions. Like the Conference, the Southern Education Board was a purely missionary organization, and its most active worker was

Page himself. He was constantly speaking and writing on his favorite subject; he printed article after article, not only in his own magazine, but in the *Atlantic,* in the *Outlook,* and in a multitude of newspapers, such as the Boston *Transcript,* the New York *Times,* and the Kansas City *Star.* And always through his writings, and, indeed, through his life, there ran, like the motif of an opera, that same perpetual plea for the "forgotten man"—the need of uplifting the backward masses through training, both of the mind and of the hand.

The General Education Board, which grew out of the Ogden organization and was financed by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, now became the chief outside interest of Page's life. He was made a member of the Executive Committee, faithfully attended all its sessions, and participated intimately in every important plan. All such bodies have their decorative members and their working members; Page belonged emphatically in the latter class. Not only was he fertile in suggestions, but his ready mind could give almost any proposal its proper emphasis and clearly set forth its essential details. Between Page and Dr. Buttrick, Secretary and now President of the Board, a close personal intimacy grew up. "Page was one of the real educational statesmen of this country," says Dr. Flexner, "probably the greatest that we have had since the Civil War."

This support of the General Education Board came at a time when that movement known as the "educational awakening" had started in the South. In 1900 North Carolina elected its greatest governor since the Civil War—Charles B. Aycock. A much repeated anecdote attributes Lincoln's detestation of slavery to a slave auction that he witnessed as a small boy; Ay-

cock's first zeal as an educational reformer had an origin that was even more pathetic, for he always carried in his mind his recollection of his own mother signing an important legal document with a cross. As a young man fresh from the university Aycock also came under the influence of Page. An old letter, preserved among Page's papers, dated February 26, 1886, discloses that he was a sympathizing reader of the "mummy" controversy; when the brickbats began flying in Page's direction Aycock wrote, telling Page that "fully three fourths of the people are with you and wish you Godspeed in your effort to awaken better work, greater activity, and freer opinion in the state." And now under Aycock's governorship North Carolina began to tackle the educational problem with a purpose. Schoolhouses started up all over the state at the rate of one a day—many of them beautiful, commodious, modern structures, in every way the equals of any in the North or West; high schools, normal schools, trade schools made their appearance wherever the need was greatest; and in other parts of the South the response was similarly energetic. The reform is not yet complete, but the description that Page gave of Southern education in 1897, accurate in all its details as it was then, has now become ancient history.

In occupations of this kind Page passed his years of maturity. His was not a spectacular life; his family for the most part still remained his most immediate interest; the daily round of an editor has its imaginative quality, but in the main it was for Page a quiet, even a cloistered existence; the work that an editor does, the achievements that he can put to his credit, are usually anonymous; and the American pub-

lic little understood the extent to which Page was influencing many of the most vital forces of his time. The business association that he had formed with Mr. Doubleday turned out most happily. Their publishing house, in a short time, attained a position of great influence and prosperity. The two men, on both the personal and the business side, were congenial and complementary; and the love that both felt for country life led to the establishment of a publishing and printing plant of unusual beauty. In Garden City, Long Island, a great brick structure was built, somewhat suggestive in its architecture of Hampton Court, surrounded by pools and fountains, Italian gardens, green walks and pergolas, gardens blooming in appropriate seasons with roses, peonies, rhododendrons, chrysanthemums, and the like, and parks of evergreen, fir, cedar, and more exotic trees and shrubs. Certainly fate could have designed no more fitting setting for Page's favorite activities than this. In assembling authors, in instigating the writing of books, in watching the achievements and the tendencies of American life, in the routine of editing his magazine —all this in association with partners whose daily companionship was a delight and a stimulation—Page spent his last years in America.

CHAPTER IV

THE WILSONIAN ERA BEGINS

IT was Page's interest in the material and spiritual elevation of the masses that first directed his attention to the Presidential aspirations of Woodrow Wilson. He and thousands of other public-spirited men saw in Wilson a leader of fine intellectual gifts who was prepared to devote his splendid energies to making life more attractive and profitable to the "forgotten man."

Page had known Mr. Wilson for thirty years, and all this time the Princeton scholar had seemed to him to be one of the most helpful influences at work in the United States. As already noted Page had met the future President when he was serving a journalistic apprenticeship in Atlanta, Georgia. Wilson was then spending his days in a dingy law office and was putting to good use the time consumed in waiting for the clients who never came by writing that famous book on "Congressional Government" which first lifted his name out of obscurity. This work, the product of a man of twenty-nine, was perhaps the first searching examination to which the American Congressional system had ever been subjected. It brought Wilson a professorship at the newly established Bryn Mawr College and drew to him other growing minds like Page's. "Watch that man!" was Page's admonition to his friends.

Page's letters also portray the new hopes with

which Wilson inspired him. "I see you are coming around to Wilson," Page writes to a friend, "and in pretty rapid fashion. I assure you that that is the solution of the problem. I have known him since we were boys, and I have been studying him lately with a great deal of care. I haven't any doubt but that is the way out. The old labels 'Democrat' and 'Republican' have ceased to have any meaning, not only in my mind and in yours, but I think in the minds of nearly all the people. Don't you feel that way?"

The campaign of 1912 was approaching its end when this letter was written; and no proceeding in American politics had so aroused Page's energies. He had himself played a part in Wilson's nomination. He was one of the first to urge the Princeton President to seize the great opportunity that was rising before him. These suggestions were coming from many sources in the summer of 1910; Mr. Wilson was about to retire from the presidency of Princeton; the movement had started to make him governor of New Jersey, and it was well understood that this was merely intended as the first step to the White House. But Mr. Wilson was himself undecided; to escape the excitement of the moment he had retired to a country house at Lyme, Connecticut. In this place, in response to a letter, Page now sought him out. His visit was a plea that Mr. Wilson should accept his proffered fate—the governorship of New Jersey, then the Presidency, and the opportunity to promote the causes in which both men believed.

"But do you think I can do it, Page?" asked the hesitating Wilson.

"I am sure you can"; and then Page again, with his customary gusto, launched into his persuasive argument. His host at one moment would assent; at

another present the difficulties; it was apparent that he was having trouble in reaching a decision. To what extent Page's conversation converted him the record does not disclose; it is apparent, however, that when, in the next two years, difficulties came, his mind seemed naturally to turn in Page's direction.

On election day Page wrote the President-elect a letter of congratulation which contains one item of the greatest interest. When the time came for a new President to deliver his first message to Congress, he surprised the country by abandoning the usual practice of sending a long written communication to be droned out by a reading clerk to a yawning company of legislators. He appeared in person and read the document himself. As President Harding has followed his example it seems likely that this innovation, which certainly represents a great improvement over the old routine, has become the esablished custom. The origin of the idea therefore has historic value.

To Woodrow Wilson

Garden City, N. Y.

Election Day, 1912. [Nov. 5]

My dear Mr. President-elect:

Before going into town to hear the returns, I write you my congratulations. Even if you were defeated, I should still congratulate you on putting a Presidential campaign on a higher level than it has ever before reached since Washington's time. Your grip became firmer and your sweep wider every week. It was inspiring to watch the unfolding of the deep meaning of it and to see the people's grasp of the main idea. It was fairly, highly, freely won, and now we enter the Era of Great Opportunity. It is hard to measure the

extent or the thrill of the new interest in public affairs and the new hope that you have aroused in thousands of men who were becoming hopeless under the long-drawn-out reign of privilege.

To the big burden of suggestions that you are receiving, may I add these small ones?

1. Call Congress in extra session mainly to revise the tariff and incidentally to prepare the way for rural credit societies. . . .

The time is come when the land must be developed by the new agriculture and farming made a business. This calls for money. Every acre will repay a reasonable loan on long time at a fair interest rate, and group-borrowing develops the men quite as much as the men will develop the soil. It saved the German Empire and is remaking Italy. And this is the proper use of much of the money that now flows into the reach of the credit barons. This building up of farm life will restore the equilibrium of our civilization and, besides, will prove to be one half the solution of our currency and credit problem. . . .

2. Set your trusted friends immediately to work, every man in the field he knows best, to prepare briefs for you on such great subjects and departments as the Currency, the Post Office, Conservation, Rural Credit, the Agricultural Department, which has the most direct power for good to the most people—to make our farmers as independent as Denmark's and to give our best country folk the dignity of the old-time English gentleman—this expert, independent information to compare with your own knowledge and with official reports.

3. The President reads (or speaks) his Inaugural to the people. Why not go back to the old custom of himself delivering his Messages to Congress?

Would that not restore a feeling of comradeship in responsibility and make the Legislative branch feel nearer to the Executive? Every President of our time has sooner or later got away with Congress.

I cannot keep from saying what a new thrill of hope and tingle of expectancy I feel—as of a great event about to happen for our country and for the restoration of popular government; for you will keep your rudder true.

Most heartily yours,
WALTER H. PAGE.

To Governor Wilson,
Princeton, N. J.

Page was one of the first of Mr. Wilson's friends to discuss with the President-elect the new legislative program. The memorandum which he made of this interview shows how little anyone, in 1912, appreciated the tremendous problems that Mr. Wilson would have to face. Only domestic matters then seemed to have the slightest importance. Especially significant is the fact that even at this early date, Page was chiefly impressed by Mr. Wilson's "loneliness."

Memorandum dated November 15, 1912

To use the Government, especially the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Education, to help actively in the restoration of country life—that's the great chance for Woodrow Wilson, ten days ago elected President. Precisely how well he understands this chance, how well, for example, he understands the grave difference between the Knapp Demonstration method of teaching farmers and the usual Agricultural

College method of lecturing to them, and what he knows about the rising movement for country schools of the right sort, and agricultural credit societies—how all this great constructive problem of Country Life lies in his mind, who knows? I do not. If I do not know, who does know? . . .

In two days he will go to Bermuda for a month to rest and to meditate. He ought to meditate on this constructive program. It seemed my duty to go and tell him about it. I asked for an interview and he telegraphed to go to-day at five o'clock.

Arthur and I drove in the car and reached Princeton just before five—a beautiful drive of something less than four hours from New York. Presently we arrived at the Wilson house.

"The Governor is engaged," I was informed by the man who opened the door. "He can see nobody. He is going away to-morrow."

"I have an appointment with him," said I, and I gave him my card.

"I know he can't see anybody."

"Will you send my card in?"

We waited at the door till the maid took it in and returned to say the Governor would presently come down.

The reception room had a desk in the corner, and on a row of chairs across the whole side of the room were piles of unopened letters. It is a plain, modestly but decently furnished room, such as you would expect to find in the modest house of a professor at Princeton. During his presidency of the college, he had lived in the President's house in the college yard. This was his own house of his professorial days.

"Hello, Page, come out here; I am glad to see you."

There he stood in a door at the back of the room, which led to his library and workroom. "Come back here."

"In the best of all possible worlds, the right thing does sometimes happen," said I.

"Yes."

"And a great opportunity."

He smiled and was cordial and said some pleasant words. But he was weary. "I have cobwebs in my head." He was not depressed but oppressed—rather shy, I thought, and I should say rather lonely. The campaign noise and the little campaigners were hushed and gone. There were no men of companionable size about him, and the Great Task lay before him. The Democratic party has not brought forward large men in public life during its long term of exclusion from the Government; and the newly elected President has had few opportunities and a very short time to make acquaintances of a continental kind. This little college town, this little hitherto corrupt state, are both small.

I went at my business without delay. The big country-life idea, the working of great economic forces to put its vitalization within sight, the coming equilibrium by the restoration of country life—all coincident with his coming into the Presidency. His administration must fall in with it, guide it, further it. The chief instruments are the Agricultural Department, the Bureau of Education, and the power of the President himself to bring about Rural Credit Societies and similar organized helps. He quickly saw the difference between Demonstration Work by the Agricultural Department and the plan to vote large sums to agricultural colleges and to the states to build up schools.

"Who is the best man for Secretary of Agriculture?"

I ought to have known, but I didn't. For who is?

"May I look about and answer your question later?"

"Yes, I will thank you."

"I wish to find the very best men for my Cabinet, regardless of consequences. I do not forget the party as an instrument of government, and I do not wish to do violence to it. But I must have the best men in the Nation"—with a very solemn tone as he sat bolt upright, with a stern look on his face, and a lonely look.

I told him my idea of the country school that must be and talked of the Bureau of Education. He saw quickly and assented to all my propositions.

And then we talked somewhat more conservatively of Conservation, about which he knows less.

I asked if he would care to have me make briefs about the Agricultural Department, the Bureau of Education, the Rural Credit Societies, and Conservation. "I shall be very grateful, if it be not too great a sacrifice."

I had gained that permission, which (if he respect my opinion) ought to guide him somewhat toward a real understanding of how the Government may help toward our Great Constructive Problem. . . .

There was a general expectation that Page would become a member of President Wilson's Cabinet, and the place for which he seemed particularly qualified was the Secretaryship of Agriculture. The smoke of battle had hardly passed away, therefore, when Page's admirers began bringing pressure to bear upon the President-elect. There was probably no man in the

United States who had such completely developed views about this Department as Page; and it is not improbable that, had circumstances combined to offer him this position, he would have accepted it. But fate in matters of this sort is sometimes kinder than a man's friends. Page had a great horror of anything which suggested office-seeking, and the campaign which now was started in his interest greatly embarrassed him. He wrote Mr. Wilson, disclaiming all responsibility and begging him to ignore these misguided efforts. As the best way of checking the movement, Page now definitely answered Mr. Wilson's question: Who was the best man for the Agricultural Department? It is interesting to note that the candidate whom Page nominated in this letter—a man who had been his friend for many years and an associate on the Southern Education Board—was the man whom Mr. Wilson chose, David F. Houston.

Though Mr. Wilson did not offer Page the Agricultural Department, he much desired to have him in his cabinet, and had already decided upon him for a post which the new President probably regarded as more important—the Interior. The narrow margin with which Page escaped this responsibility illustrates again the slender threads upon which history is constructed. The episode is also not without its humorous side. For there was only one reason why Page did not enter the Cabinet as Secretary of the Interior: he was so busy planning his new house on the sandhills of North Carolina that, while cabinets were being formed and great decisions taken, he was absent from New York.

A short time before the inauguration, Mr. Wilson asked Colonel House to arrange a meeting with Page in the latter's apartment. Mr. Wilson wished to see

him on a Saturday; the purpose was to offer him the Secretaryship of the Interior. Colonel House called up Page's office at Garden City and was informed that he was in North Carolina. Colonel House then telegraphed asking Page to start north immediately, and suggesting the succeeding Monday as a good time for the interview. A reply was at once received from Page that he was on his way.

Meanwhile certain of Mr. Wilson's advisers had heard of the plan and were raising objections. Page was a Southerner; the Interior Department has supervision over the pension bureau, with its hundreds of thousands of Civil War veterans as pensioners; moreover, Page was an outspoken enemy of the whole pension system and had led several "campaigns" against it. The appointment would never do! Mr. Wilson himself was persuaded that it would be a mistake.

"But what are we going to do about Page?" asked Colonel House. "I have summoned him from North Carolina on important business. What excuse shall I give for bringing him way up here?"

But the President-elect was equal to the emergency.

"Here's the cabinet list," he drily replied. "Show it to Page. Tell him these are the people I have about decided to appoint and ask him what he thinks of them. Then he will assume that we summoned him to get his advice."

When Page made his appearance, therefore, Colonel House gave him the list of names and solemnly asked him what he thought of them.

About the time of Wilson's election a great calamity befell one of Page's dearest friends. Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, the President of the University of Virginia, one of the pioneer educational forces in the Southern

States, and for years an associate of Page on the General Education Board, was stricken with tuberculosis. He was taken to Saranac, and here a patient course of treatment happily restored him to health. One of the dreariest aspects of such an experience is its tediousness and loneliness. Yet the maintenance of one's good spirits and optimism is an essential part of the treatment. And it was in this work that Page now proved an indispensable aid to the medical men. As soon as Dr. Alderman found himself stretched out, a weak and isolated figure, cut off from those activities and interests which had been his inspiration for forty years, with no companions except his own thoughts and a few sufferers like himself, letters began to arrive with weekly regularity from the man whom he always refers to as "dear old Page." The gayety and optimism of these letters, the lively comments which they passed upon men and things, and their wholesome and genial philosophy, were largely instrumental, Dr. Alderman has always believed, in his recovery. Their effect was so instant and beneficial that the physicians asked to have them read to the other patients, who also derived abounding comfort and joy from them. The whole episode was one of the most beautiful in Page's life, and brings out again that gift for friendship which was perhaps his finest quality.

To Edwin A. Alderman

Garden City, L. I.
December 31, 1912.

MY DEAR ED ALDERMAN:

I have a new amusement, a new excitement, a new study, as you have and as we all have who really be-

lieve in democracy—a new study, a new hope, and sometimes a new fear; and its name is Wilson. I have for many years regarded myself as an interested, but always a somewhat detached, outsider, believing that the democratic idea was real and safe and lifting, if we could ever get it put into action, contenting myself ever with such patches of it as time and accident and occasion now and then sewed on our gilded or tattered garments. But now it is come—the real thing; at any rate a man somewhat like us, whose thought and aim and dream are our thought and aim and dream. That's enormously exciting! I didn't suppose I'd ever become so interested in a general proposition or in a governmental hope.

Will he do it? Can he do it? Can anybody do it? How can we help him do it? Now that the task is on him, does he really understand? Do I understand him and he me? There's a certain unreality about it.

The man himself—I find that nobody quite knows him now. Alas! I wonder if he quite knows himself. Temperamentally very shy, having lived too much alone and far too much with women (how I wish two of his daughters were sons!) this Big Thing having descended on him before he knew or was quite prepared for it, thrust into a whirl of self-seeking men even while he is trying to think out the theory of the duties that press, knowing the necessity of silence, surrounded by small people—well, I made up my mind that his real friends owed it to him and to what we all hope for, to break over his reserve and to volunteer help.

He asks for conferences with official folk—only, I think. So I began to write memoranda about those subjects of government about which I know something and have opinions and about men who are or who may

be related to them. It has been great sport to set down in words without any reserve precisely what you think. It is imprudent, of course, as most things worth doing are. But what have I to lose, I who have my life now planned and laid out and have got far beyond the reach of gratitude or hatred or praise or blame or fear of any man? I sent him some such memoranda. Here came forthwith a note of almost abject thanks. I sent more. Again, such a note —written in his own hand. Yet not a word of what he thinks. The Sphinx was garrulous in comparison.

Then here comes a mob of my good friends crying for office for me. So I sent a ten-line note, by the hand of my secretary, saying that this should not disturb my perfect frankness nor (I knew it would not) his confidence. Again, a note in his own hand, of perfect understanding and with the very glow of gratitude. And he talks—generalities to the public. Perhaps that's all he can talk now. Wise? Yes. But does he know the men about him? Does he really know men? Nobody knows. Thus 'twixt fear and hope I see—suspense. I'll swear I can't doubt, I can't believe. Whether it is going to work out or not —whether he or anybody can work it out of the haze of theory—nobody knows; and nobody's speculation is better than mine and mine is worthless.

This is the game, this is the excitement, this is the doubthope and the hopedoubt. I send this word about it to you (I could and would to nobody else: you're snowbound, you see, and don't write much and don't see many people: restrain your natural loquacity!). But for the love of heaven tell me if you see any way *very clearly*. It's a kind of misty dream to me.

I ask myself why should I concern myself about it. Of course the answer's easy and I think creditable. I do profoundly hold this democratic faith and believe that it can be worked into action among men; and it may be I shall yet see it done. That's the secret of my interest. But when this awful office descends on a man, it oppresses him, changes him, you are not quite so sure of him, you doubt whether he knows himself or you in the old way.

And I find among men the very crudest ideas of government or of democracy. They have not thought the thing out. They hold no ordered creed of human organization or advancement. They leave all to chance and think, when they think at all, that chance determines it. And yet the Great Hope persists, and I think I have grown an inch by it.

I wonder how it seems, looked at from the cold mountains of Lake Saranac?

It's the end of the year. Mrs. Page and I (alone!) have been talking of democracy, of these very things I've written. The bell-ringing and the dancing and the feasting are not, on this particular year, to our liking. We see all our children gone—half of them to nests of their own building, the rest on errands of their own pleasure, and we are left, young yet, but the main job of life behind us! We're going down to a cottage in southern North Carolina (with our own cook and motor car, praise God!) for February, still further to think this thing out and incidentally to build us a library, in which we'll live when we can. That, for convention's sake, we call a Vacation.

Your brave note came to-day. Of course, you'll "get" 'em—those small enemies. The gain of twelve pounds tells the story. The danger is, your season of

philosophy and reverie will be too soon ended. Don't fret; the work and the friends will be here when you come down. . . .

A conquering New Year—that's what you'll find, begun before this reaches you, carrying all good wishes from

Yours affectionately,
W. H. P.

President Wilson finally succeeded in carrying out his determination to make Page an important part of his Administration. One morning Page's telephone rang and Colonel House's well-known and well-modulated voice came over the wire.

"Good morning, Your Excellency," was his greeting.

"What the devil are you talking about?" asked Page.

Then Colonel House explained himself. The night before, he said, he had dined at the White House. In a pause of the conversation the President had quietly remarked:

"I've about made up my mind to send Walter Page to England. What do you think of that?"

Colonel House thought very well of it indeed and the result of his conversation was this telephone call, in which he was authorized to offer Page the Ambassadorship to Great Britain.

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND BEFORE THE WAR

THE London Embassy is the greatest diplomatic gift at the disposal of the President, and, in the minds of the American people, it possesses a glamour and an historic importance all its own. Page came to the position, as his predecessors had come, with a sense of awe; the great traditions of the office; the long line of distinguished men, from Thomas Pinckney to Whitelaw Reid, who had filled it; the peculiar delicacy of the problems that then existed between the two countries; the reverent respect which Page had always entertained for English history, English literature, and English public men—all these considerations naturally quickened the new ambassador's imagination and, at the same time, made his arrival in England a rather solemn event. Yet his first days in London had their grotesque side as well. He himself has recorded his impressions, and, since they contain an important lesson for the citizens of the world's richest and most powerful Republic, they should be preserved. When the ambassador of practically any other country reaches London, he finds waiting for him a spacious and beautiful embassy, filled with a large corps of secretaries and servants—everything ready to the minutest detail, for the beginning of his labors. He simply enters these elaborate state-owned and state-supported quarters and starts work. How differently the mighty

United States welcomes its ambassadors let Page's memorandum tell:

The boat touched at Queenstown, and a mass of Irish reporters came aboard and wished to know what I thought of Ireland. Some of them printed the important announcement that I was quite friendly to Ireland! At Liverpool was Mr. Laughlin,[1] Chargé d'Affaires in London since Mr. Reid's death, to meet me, and of course the consul, Mr. Washington. . . .

On our arrival in London, Laughlin explained that he had taken quarters for me at the Coburg Hotel, whither we drove, after having fought my way through a mob of reporters at the station. One fellow told me that since I left New York the papers had published a declaration by me that I meant to be very "democratic" and would under no conditions wear "knee breeches"; and he asked me about that report. I was foolish enough to reply that the existence of an ass in the United States ought not necessarily to require the existence of a corresponding ass in London. He printed that! I never knew the origin of this "knee breeches" story.

That residence at the Coburg Hotel for three months was a crowded and uncomfortable nightmare. The indignity and inconvenience—even the humiliation—of an ambassador beginning his career in an hotel, especially during the Court season, and a green ambassador at that! I hope I may not die before our government does the conventional duty to provide ambassadors' residences.

The next morning I went to the Chancery (123 Victoria Street) and my heart sank. I had never in

[1] Mr. Irwin Laughlin, first secretary of the American Embassy in London.

my life been in an American Embassy. I had had no business with them in Paris or in London on my previous visits. In fact I had never been in any embassy except the British Embassy at Washington. But the moment I entered that dark and dingy hall at 123 Victoria Street, between two cheap stores—the same entrance that the dwellers in the cheap flats above used—I knew that Uncle Sam had no fit dwelling there. And the Ambassador's room greatly depressed me—dingy with twenty-nine years of dirt and darkness, and utterly undignified. And the rooms for the secretaries and attachés were the little bedrooms, kitchen, etc., of that cheap flat; that's all it was. For the place we paid $1,500 a year. I did not understand then and I do not understand yet how Lowell, Bayard, Phelps, Hay, Choate, and Reid endured that cheap hole. Of course they stayed there only about an hour a day; but they sometimes saw important people there. And, whether they ever saw anybody there or not, the offices of the United States Government in London ought at least to be as good as a common lawyer's office in a country town in a rural state of our Union. Nobody asked for anything for an embassy; nobody got anything for an embassy. I made up my mind in ten minutes that I'd get out of this place.

. . . . . .

Every afternoon people came to the hotel to see me—some to pay their respects and to make life pleasant, some out of mere curiosity, and many for ends of their own. I confess that on many days nightfall found me completely worn out. But the evenings seldom brought a chance to rest. The social season was going at its full gait; and the new ambas-

sador (any new ambassador) would have been invited to many functions. A very few days after my arrival, the Duchess of X invited Frank and me to dinner. The powdered footmen were the chief novelty of the occasion for us. But I was much confused because nobody introduced anybody to anybody else.

. . . . . .

Party succeeded party. I went to them because they gave me a chance to become acquainted with people.

But very early after my arrival, I was of course summoned by the King. I had presented a copy of my credentials to the Foreign Secretary (Sir Edward Grey) and the real credentials—the original in a sealed envelope—I must present to His Majesty. One morning the King's Master of the Ceremonies, Sir Arthur Walsh, came to the hotel with the royal coaches, four or five of them, and the richly caparisoned grooms. The whole staff of the Embassy must go with me. We drove to Buckingham Palace, and, after waiting a few moments, I was ushered into the King's presence. He stood in one of the drawing rooms on the ground floor looking out on the garden. There stood with him in uniform Sir Edward Grey. I entered and bowed. He shook my hand, and I spoke my little piece of three or four sentences.

He replied, welcoming me and immediately proceeded to express his surprise and regret that a great and rich country like the United States had not provided a residence for its ambassadors. "It is not fair to an ambassador," said he; and he spoke most earnestly.

I reminded him that, although the lack of a home

was an inconvenience, the trouble or discomfort that fell on an ambassador was not so bad as the wrong impression which I feared was produced about the United States and its government, and I explained that we had had so many absorbing domestic tasks and, in general, so few absorbing foreign relations, that we had only begun to develop what might be called an international consciousness. . . .

In time Page obtained an entirely adequate and dignified house at 6 Grosvenor Square, and soon found that the American Ambassadorship had compensations which were hardly suggested by his first glimpse of the lugubrious Chancery. He brought to this new existence his plastic and inquisitive mind, and his mighty gusto for the interesting and the unusual; he immensely enjoyed his meetings with the most important representatives of all types of British life.

To Herbert S. Houston

American Embassy
London
Sunday, 24 Aug., 1913.

DEAR H. S. H.:

. . . You know there's been much discussion of the decadence of the English people. I don't believe a word of it. They have an awful slum, I hear, as everybody knows, and they have an idle class. Worse, from an equal-opportunity point-of-view, they have a very large servant class, and a large class that depends on the nobility and the rich. All these are economic and social drawbacks. But they have always had all these—except that the slum has become larger in modern years. And I don't see or find

any reason to believe in the theory of decadence. The world never saw a finer lot of men than the best of their ruling class. You may search the world and you may search history for finer men than Lord Morley, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Harcourt, and other members of the present Cabinet.

And I meet such men everywhere—gently bred, high-minded, physically fit, intellectually cultivated, patriotic. If the devotion to old forms and the inertia which makes any change almost impossible strike an American as out-of date, you must remember that in the grand old times of England, they had all these things and had them worse than they are now. I can't see that the race is breaking down or giving out. Consider how their political morals have been pulled up since the days of the rotten boroughs; consider how their court life is now high and decent, and think what it once was. British trade is larger this year than it ever was, Englishmen are richer than they ever were and more of them are rich. They write and speak and play cricket, and govern, and fight as well as they have ever done—excepting, of course, the writing of Shakespeare.

Another conclusion that is confirmed the more you see of English life is their high art of living. When they make their money, they stop money-making and cultivate their minds and their gardens and entertain their friends and do all the high arts of living—to perfection. Three days ago a retired soldier gave a garden party in my honor, twenty-five miles out of London. There was his historic house, a part of it 500 years old; there were his ten acres of garden, his lawn, his trees; and they walk with you over it all; they sit out-of-doors; they serve tea; they take life

rationally; they talk pleasantly (not jocularly, nor story-telling); they abhor the smart in talk or in conduct; they have gentleness, cultivation, the best manners in the world; and they are genuine.

The hostess has me take a basket and go with her while she cuts it full of flowers for us to bring home; and, as we walk, she tells the story of the place. She is a tenant-for-life; it is entailed. Her husband was wounded in South Africa. Her heir is her nephew. The home, of course, will remain in the family forever. No, they don't go to London much in recent years: why should they? But they travel a month or more. They give three big tea-parties—one when the rhododendrons bloom and the others at stated times. They have friends to stay with them half the time, perhaps—sometimes parties of a dozen. England never had a finer lot of folk than these. And you see them everywhere. The art of living sanely they have developed to as high a level, I think, as you will find at any time in any land. . . .

I'm beginning to believe that the Englishman has always been afraid of the future—that's what keeps him so alert. They say to me: "You have frightful things happen in the United States—your Governor of New York,[1] your Thaw case, your corruption, etc., etc.; and yet you seem sure and tell us that your countrymen feel sure of the safety of your government." In the newspaper comments on my Southampton speech the other day, this same feeling cropped up; the American Ambassador assures us that the note of hope is the dominant note of the Republic—etc., etc. Yes, they are dull, *in a way*—not dull, so much as

[1] A reference to William Sulzer, Governor of New York, who at this time was undergoing impeachment.

steady; and yet they have more solid sense than any other people.

It's an interesting study—the most interesting in the world. The genuineness of the courtesy, the real kindness and the hospitality of the English are beyond praise and without limit. In this they show a strange contradiction to their dickering habits in trade and their "unctuous rectitude" in stealing continents. I know a place in the world now where they are steadily moving their boundary line into other people's territory. I guess they really believe that the earth belongs to them.

Sincerely,
W. H. P.

To Arthur W. Page [1]

Gordon Arms Hotel, Elgin, Scotland.
September 6, 1913.

DEAR ARTHUR:

Your mother and Kitty [2] and I are on our way to see Andy.[3] Had you any idea that to motor from London to Skibo means driving more than eight hundred miles? Our speedometer now shows more than seven hundred and we've another day to go—at least one hundred and thirty miles. And we haven't even had a tire accident. We're having a delightful journey—only this country yields neither vegetables nor fruits, and I have to live on oatmeal. They spell it p-o-r-r-i-d-g-e, and they call it pŭruge. But they beat

[1] The Ambassador's son.
[2] Miss Katharine A. Page.
[3] Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

all creation as carnivorous folk. We stayed last night at a beautiful mountain hotel at Braemar (the same town whereat Stevenson wrote "Treasure Island") and they had nine kinds of meat for dinner and eggs in three ways, and no vegetables but potatoes. But this morning we struck the same thin oatbread that you ate at Grandfather Mountain.

I've never understood the Scotch. I think they are, without doubt, the most capable race in the world—away from home. But how they came to be so and how they keep up their character and supremacy and keep breeding true needs explanation. As you come through the country, you see the most monotonous and dingy little houses and thousands of robust children, all dirtier than niggers. In the fertile parts of the country, the fields are beautifully cultivated—for Lord This-and-T'Other who lives in London and comes up here in summer to collect his rents and to shoot. The country people seem desperately poor. But they don't lose their robustness. In the solid cities—the solidest you ever saw, all being of granite —such as Edinburgh and Aberdeen, where you see the prosperous class, they look the sturdiest and most independent fellows you ever saw. As they grow old they all look like blue-bellied Presbyterian elders. Scotch to the marrow—everybody and everything seem—bare knees alike on the street and in the hotel with dress coats on, bagpipes—there's no sense in these things, yet being Scotch they live forever. The first men I saw early this morning on the street in front of the hotel were two weather-beaten old chaps, with gray beards under their chins. "Gudddddd murrrrningggggg, Andy," said one. "Gudddddd murrningggggg, Sandy," said the other; and they trudged on.

They'd dethrone kings before they'd shave differently or drop their burrs and gutturals or cover their knees or cease lying about the bagpipe. And you can't get it out of the blood.

Your mother [1] becomes provoked when I say these things, and I shouldn't wonder if you yourself resent them and break out quoting Burns. Now the Highlands can't support a population larger than the mountain counties of Kentucky. Now your Kentucky feud is a mere disgrace to civilization. But your Highland feud is celebrated in song and story. Every clan keeps itself together to this day by its history and by its plaid. At a turn in the road in the mountains yesterday, there stood a statue of Rob Roy painted every stripe to life. We saw his sword and purse in Sir Walter's house at Abbotsford. The King himself wore the kilt and one of the plaids at the last court ball at Buckingham Palace, and there is a man who writes his name and is called "The Macintosh of Macintosh," and that's a prouder title than the King's. A little handful of sheep-stealing bandits got themselves immortalized and heroized, and they are now all Presbyterian elders. They got *their* church "established" in Scotland, and when the King comes to Scotland, by Jehoshaphat! he is obliged to become a Presbyterian. Yet your Kentucky feudist—poor devil—he comes too late. The Scotchman has preëmpted that particular field of glory. And all such comparisons make your mother fighting mad. . . .

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

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[1] Mrs. Walter H. Page is the daughter of a Scotchman from Ayrshire.

To the President

American Embassy, London.
October 25, 1913.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I am moved once in a while to write you privately, not about any specific piece of public business, but only, if I can, to transmit something of the atmosphere of the work here. And, since this is meant quite as much for your amusement as for any information it may carry, don't read it "in office hours."

The future of the world belongs to us. A man needs to live here, with two economic eyes in his head, a very little time to become very sure of this. Everybody will see it presently. These English are spending their capital, and it is their capital that continues to give them their vast power. Now what are we going to do with the leadership of the world presently when it clearly falls into our hands?[1] And how can we use the English for the highest uses of democracy?

You see their fear of an on-sweeping democracy in their social treatment of party opponents. A Tory lady told me with tears that she could no longer invite her Liberal friends to her house: "I have lost them —they are robbing us, you know." I made the mistake of saying a word in praise of Sir Edward Grey to a duke. "Yes, yes, no doubt an able man; but you must understand, sir, that I don't train with that gang." A bishop explained to me at elaborate length

[1] The astonishing thing about Page's comment on the leadership of the United States—if it would only take this leadership—is that these letters were written in 1913, a year before the outbreak of the war, and eight years before the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921–22.

why the very monarchy is doomed unless something befalls Lloyd George and his program. Every dinner party is made up with strict reference to the party politics of the guests. Sometimes you imagine you see something like civil war; and money is flowing out of the Kingdom into Canada in the greatest volume ever known and I am told that a number of old families are investing their fortunes in African lands.

These and such things are, of course, mere chips which show the direction the slow stream runs. The great economic tide of the century flows our way. *We* shall have the big world questions to decide presently. Then we shall need world policies; and it will be these old-time world leaders that we shall then have to work with, more closely than now.

The English make a sharp distinction between the American people and the American Government—a distinction that they are conscious of and that they themselves talk about. They do not think of our *people* as foreigners. I have a club book on my table wherein the members are classified as British, Colonial, American, and Foreign—quite unconsciously. But they do think of our government as foreign, and as a frontier sort of thing without good manners or good faith. This distinction presents the big task of implanting here a real respect for our government. People often think to compliment the American Ambassador by assuming that he is better than his government and must at times be ashamed of it. Of course the Government never does this—never—but persons in unofficial life; and I have sometimes hit some hard blows under this condescending provocation.

This is the one experience that I have found irritating. They commiserate me on having a government that will not provide an ambassador's residence—

from the King to my servants. They talk about American lynchings. Even the *Spectator,* in an early editorial about you, said that we should now see what stuff there is in the new President by watching whether you would stop lynchings. They forever quote Bryce on the badness of our municipal government. They pretend to think that the impeachment of governors is common and ought to be commoner. One delicious M. P. asked me: "Now since the Governor of New York is impeached, who becomes Vice-President?" [1] Ignorance, unfathomable ignorance, is at the bottom of much of it; if the Town Treasurer of Yuba Dam gets a $100 "rake off" on a paving contract, our city government is a failure.

I am about to conclude that our yellow press does us more harm abroad than at home, and many of the American correspondents of the English papers send exactly the wrong news. The whole governing class of England has a possibly exaggerated admiration for the American people and something very like contempt for the American Government.

If I make it out right two causes (in addition to their ignorance) of their dislike of our government are (1) its lack of manners in the past, and (2) its indiscretions of publicity about foreign affairs. We ostentatiously stand aloof from their polite ways and courteous manners in many of the everyday, ordinary, unimportant dealings with them—aloof from the common amenities of long-organized political life. . . .

Not one of these things is worth mentioning or re-

[1] Just what this critical Briton had in mind, in thinking that the removal of a New York governor created a vacancy in the Vice-Presidency, is not clear. Possibly, however, he had a cloudy recollection of the fact that Theodore Roosevelt, after serving as Governor of New York State, became Vice-President, and may have concluded from this that the two offices were held by the same man.

membering. But generations of them have caused our government to be regarded as thoughtless of the fine little acts of life—as rude. The more I find out about diplomatic customs and the more I hear of the little-big troubles of others, the more need I find to be careful about details of courtesy. . . .

But our Government, though green, isn't young enough to plead its youth. It is time that it, too, were learning Old World manners in dealing with Old World peoples. I do not know whether we need a Bureau, or a Major-Domo, or a Master of Ceremonies at Washington, but we need somebody to prompt us to act as polite as we really are, somebody to think of those gentler touches that we naturally forget. Some other governments have such officers —perhaps all. The Japanese, for instance, are newcomers in world politics. But this Japanese Ambassador and his wife here never miss a trick; and they come across the square and ask us how to do it! All the other governments, too, play the game of small courtesies to perfection—the French, of course, and the Spanish and—even the old Turk.

Another reason for the English distrust of our government is its indiscretions in the past of this sort: one of our Ministers to Germany, you will recall, was obliged to resign because the Government at Washington inadvertently published one of his confidential despatches; Griscom saved his neck only by the skin, when he was in Japan, for a similar reason. These things travel all round the world from one chancery to another and all governments know them. Yesterday somebody in Washington talked about my despatch summarizing my talk with Sir Edward Grey about Mexico, and it appeared in the papers here this morning that Sir Edward had told me that the big

business interests were pushing him hard. This I sent as only *my* inference. I had at once to disclaim it. This leaves in his mind a doubt about our care for secrecy. They have monstrous big doors and silent men in Downing Street; and, I am told, a stenographer sits behind a big screen in Sir Edward's room while an ambassador talks![1] I wonder if my comments on certain poets, which I have poured forth there to provoke his, are preserved in the archives of the British Empire. The British Empire is surely very welcome to them. I have twice found it useful, by the way, to bring up Wordsworth when he has begun to talk about Panama tolls. Then your friend Canon Rawnsley[2] has, without suspecting it, done good service in diplomacy.

The newspaper men here, by the way, both English and American, are disposed to treat us fairly and to be helpful. The London *Times,* on most subjects, is very friendly, and I find its editors worth cultivating for their own sakes and because of their position. It is still the greatest English newspaper. Its general friendliness to the United States, by the way, has started a rumor that I hear once in a while—that it is really owned by Americans—nonsense yet awhile. To the fairness and helpfulness of the newspaper men

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[1] For years this idea of the stenographer back of a screen in the Foreign Office has been abroad, but it is entirely unfounded. Several years ago a Foreign Secretary, perhaps Lord Salisbury, put a screen behind his desk to keep off the draughts and from this precaution the myth arose that it shielded a stenographer who took a complete record of ambassadorial conversations. After an ambassador leaves, the Foreign Secretary, however, does write out the important points in the conversation. Copies are made and printed, and sent to the King, the Prime Minister, the British Ambassador in the country to which the interview relates, and occasionally to others. All these records are, of course, carefully preserved in the archives of the Foreign Office.

[2] The Rev. H. D. Rawnsley, a personal friend of President Wilson.

there are one or two exceptions, for instance, a certain sneaking whelp who writes for several papers. He went to the Navy League dinner last night at which I made a little speech. When I sat down, he remarked to his neighbor, with a yawn, "Well, nothing in it for me. The Ambassador, I am afraid, said nothing for which I can demand his recall." They, of course, don't care thrippence about me; it's you they hope to annoy.

Then after beating them at their own game of daily little courtesies, we want a fight with them—a good stiff fight about something wherein we are dead right, to remind them sharply that we have sand in our craw.[1] I pray every night for such a fight; for they like fighting men. Then they'll respect our government as they already respect us—if we are dead right.

But I've little hope for a fight of the right kind with Sir Edward Grey. He is the very reverse of insolent—fair, frank, sympathetic, and he has so clear an understanding of our real character that he'd yield anything that his party and Parliament would permit. He'd make a good American with the use of very little sandpaper. Of course I know him better than I know any other member of the Cabinet, but he seems to me the best-balanced man of them all. . . .

We are in the international game—not in its Old World intrigues and burdens and sorrows and melancholy, but in the inevitable way to leadership and to cheerful mastery in the future; and everybody knows that we are in it but us. It is a sheer blind habit that causes us to continue to try to think of ourselves as aloof. They think in terms of races here, and we are

[1] It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the Ambassador was thinking only of a diplomatic "fight."

of their race, and we shall become the strongest and the happiest branch of it.

While we play the game with them, we shall play it better by playing it under their long-wrought-out rules of courtesy in everyday affairs.

We shall play it better, too, if our government play it quietly—except when the subject demands publicity. I have heard that in past years the foreign representatives of our government have reported too few things and much too meagerly. I have heard since I have been here that these representatives become timid because Washington has for many a year conducted its foreign business too much in the newspapers; and the foreign governments themselves are always afraid of this.

Meantime I hardly need tell you of my appreciation of such a chance to make so interesting a study and to enjoy so greatly the most interesting experience, I really believe, in the whole world. I only hope that in time I may see how to shape the constant progression of incidents into a constructive course of events; for we are soon coming into a time of big changes.

Most heartily yours,

WALTER H. PAGE.

To Frank N. Doubleday and Others

London, Sunday, December 28, 1913.

MY DEAR COMRADES:

I was never one of those abnormal creatures who got Christmas all ready by the Fourth of July. The true spirit of the celebration has just now begun to work on me—three days late. In this respect the spirit is very like Christmas plum pudding. More-

over, we've just got the patriotic fervor flowing at high tide this morning. This is the President's birthday. We've put up the Stars and Stripes on the roof; and half an hour ago the King's Master of Ceremonies drove up in a huge motor car and, being shown into my presence in the state drawing room, held his hat in his hand and (said he):

"Your Excellency: I am commanded by the King to express to you His Majesty's congratulations on the birthday of the President, to wish him a successful administration and good health and long life and to convey His Majesty's greeting to Your Excellency: and His Majesty commands me to express the hope that you will acquaint the President with His Majesty's good wishes."

Whereto I made just as pretty a little speech as your 'umble sarvant could. Then we sat down, I called in Mrs. Page and my secretary and we talked like human beings.

Having worked like the devil, upon whom, I imagine, at this bibulous season many heavy duties fall—having thus toiled for two months—the international docket is clean, I've got done a round of twenty-five speeches (O Lord!) I've slept three whole nights, I've made my dinner calls—you see I'm feeling pretty well, in this first period of quiet life I've yet found in this Babylon. Praise Heaven! they go off for Christmas. Everything's shut up tight. The streets of London are as lonely and as quiet as the road to Oyster Bay while the Oyster is in South America. It's about as mild here as with you in October and as damp as Sheepshead's Bay in an autumn storm. But such people as you meet complain of the c-o-l-d—the c-o-l-d; and they run into their heatless houses and put on extra waistcoats and furs and throw shawls over their

knees and curse Lloyd George and enjoy themselves. They are a great people—even without mint juleps in summer or eggnog in winter; and I like them. The old gouty Lords curse the Americans for the decline of drinking. And you can't live among them without laughing yourself to death and admiring them, too. It's a fine race to be sprung from.

All this field of international relations—you fellows regard it as a bore. So it used to be before my entrance into the game! But it's everlastingly interesting. Just to give him a shock, I asked the Foreign Secretary the other day what difference it would make if the Foreign Offices were all to go out of business and all the ambassadors were to be hanged. He thought a minute and said: "Suppose war kept on in the Balkans, the Russians killed all their Jews, Germany took Holland and sent an air fleet over London, the Japanese landed in California, the English took all the oil wells in Central and South America and——"

"Good Lord!" said I, "do you and I prevent all these calamities? If so, we don't get half the credit that is due us—do we?"

You could ask the same question about any group or profession of men in the world; and on a scratch, I imagine that any of them would be missed less than they think. But the realness and the bigness of the job here in London is simply oppressive. We don't even know what it is in the United States and, of course, we don't go about doing it right. If we did, we shouldn't pick up a green fellow on the plain of Long Island and send him here; we'd train the most capable male babies we have from the cradle. But this leads a long way.

As I look back over these six or seven months, from

the pause that has come this week, I'm bound to say (being frank, not to say vain) that I had the good fortune to do one piece of work that was worth the effort and worth coming to do—about that infernal Mexican situation. An abler man would have done it better; but, as it was, I did it; and I have a most appreciative letter about it from the President.

By thunder, he's doing *his* job, isn't he? Whether you like the job or not, you've got to grant that. When I first came over here, I found a mild curiosity about Wilson—only mild. But now they sit up and listen and ask most eager questions. He has impressed his personality most strongly on the governing class here.

Yours heartily,

W. H. P.

CHAPTER VI

AMERICA TRIES TO PREVENT THE EUROPEAN WAR

PAGE'S mind, from the day of his arrival in England, had been filled with that portent which was the most outstanding fact in European life. Could nothing be done to prevent the dangers threatened by European militarism? Was there no way of forestalling the war which seemed every day to be approaching nearer? The dates of the following letters, August, 1913, show that this was one of the first ideas which Page presented to the new Administration.

To Edward M. House

Aug. 28, 1913.

My dear House:

. . . Everything is lovely and the goose hangs high. We're having a fine time. Only, only, only—I do wish to do something constructive and lasting. Here are great navies and armies and great withdrawals of men from industry—an enormous waste. Here are kings and courts and gold lace and ceremonies which, without producing anything, require great cost to keep them going. Here are all the privileges and taxes that this state of things implies—every one a hindrance to human progress. We are free from most of these. We have more people and more capable people and many times more territory than

both England and Germany; and we have more *potential* wealth than all Europe. They know that. They'd like to find a way to escape. The Hague programs, for the most part, just lead them around a circle in the dark back to the place where they started. Somebody needs to *do* something. If we could find some friendly use for these navies and armies and kings and things—in the service of humanity—they'd follow us. We ought to find a way to use them in cleaning up the tropics under our leadership and under our code of ethics—that everything must be done for the good of the tropical peoples and that nobody may annex a foot of land. They want a job. Then they'd quit sitting on their haunches, growling at one another.

I wonder if we couldn't serve notice that the land-stealing game is forever ended and that the cleaning up of backward lands is now in order—for the people that live there; and then invite Europe's help to make the tropics as healthful as the Panama Zone? . . .

Heartily yours,
WALTER H. PAGE.

It is one of the minor ironies of modern history that the United States and Great Britain should have selected 1914 as a year for a great peace celebration. That year marked the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, and in 1913 comprehensive plans had already been formed for observing this impressive centennial. The plan was to make it more than the mere observance of a hundred years of peaceful intercourse; it was the intention to use the occasion to emphasize the fundamental identity of American and

British ideals and to lay the foundation of a permanent understanding and friendship. The erection of a monument to Abraham Lincoln at Westminster—a plan that has since been realized—was one detail of this program. Another was the restoration of Sulgrave Manor, the English country seat of the Washingtons, and its preservation as a place where the peoples of both countries could share their common traditions. Page now dared to hope that President Wilson might associate himself with this great purpose to the extent of coming to England and accepting this gift in the name of the American nation. Such a Presidential visit, he believed, would exercise a mighty influence in forestalling a threatening European war. The ultimate purpose, that is, was world peace—precisely the same motive that led President Wilson, in 1919, to make a European pilgrimage.

This idea was no passing fancy with Page: it was with him a favorite topic of conversation. Such a Presidential visit, he believed, would accomplish more than any other influences in dissipating the clouds that were darkening the European landscape. He would elaborate the idea at length in discussions with his intimates.

"What I want," he would say, "is to have the President of the United States and the King of England stand up side by side and let the world take a good look at them!"

But at that time Washington was too busy with its domestic program to consider such a proposal seriously. "Your letters," wrote Colonel House in reply, "have come to me and lifted me out of the rut of things and given me a glimpse of a fair land. What you are thinking of and what you want this Adminis-

tration to do is beyond the power of accomplishment for the moment. My desk is covered with matters of no lasting importance, but which come to me as a part of the day's work, and which must be done if I am to help lift the load that is pressing upon the President. It tells me better than anything else what he has to bear, and how utterly futile it is for him to attempt such problems as you present."

From the President

MY DEAR PAGE:

. . . As for your suggestion that I should myself visit England during my term of office, I must say that I agree with all your arguments for it, and yet the case against the President's leaving the country, particularly now that he is expected to exercise a constant leadership in all parts of the business of the government, is very strong and I am afraid overwhelming. It might be the beginning of a practice of visiting foreign countries which would lead Presidents rather far afield.

It is a most attractive idea, I can assure you, and I turn away from it with the greatest reluctance.

We hear golden opinions of the impression you are making in England, and I have only to say that it is just what I had expected.

Cordially and faithfully yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

HON. WALTER H. PAGE.

In December, however, evidently Colonel House's mind had turned to the general subject that had so engaged that of the Ambassador.

From Edward M. House

December 13th, 1913.

DEAR PAGE:

In my budget of yesterday I did not tell you of the suggestion which I made to Sir William Tyrrell when he was here, and which I also made to the President. . . .

It ocurred to me that between us all we might bring about the naval holiday which Winston Churchill has proposed. My plan is that I should go to Germany in the spring and see the Kaiser, and try to win him over to the thought that is uppermost in our mind and that of the British Government. . . .

I spoke to the President about the matter and he seemed pleased with the suggestion; in fact, I might say, he was enthusiastic. He said, just as Sir William did, that it would be too late for this year's budget; but he made a suggestion that he get the Appropriations Committee to incorporate a clause, permitting him to eliminate certain parts of the battleship budget in the event that other nations declared for a naval holiday. So this will be done and will further the plan.

Now I want to get you into the game. If you think it advisable, take the matter up with Sir William Tyrrell and then with Sir Edward Grey, or directly with Sir Edward, if you prefer, and give me the benefit of your advice and conclusions. . . .

Faithfully yours,

E. M. HOUSE.

It is apparent from Page's letters that the suggestion now contained in Colonel House's communication would receive a friendly hearing. The idea that

Colonel House suggested was merely the initial stage of a plan which soon took on more ambitious proportions. Was it not possible to bring the greatest nations, especially the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, to some agreement on this question, as well as on the question of disarmament? This once accomplished, the way could be prepared for joint action on the numerous other problems which were then threatening the peace of the world.

The League of Nations was then not even a phrase, but the plan that was forming in Colonel House's mind was at least some scheme for permanent international coöperation. For several years Germany had been the nation which had proved the greatest obstacle to such international friendliness and arbitration. The Kaiser had destroyed both Hague Conferences as influential forces in the remaking of the world; and in the autumn of 1913 he had taken on a more belligerent attitude than ever. If this attempt to establish a better condition of things was to succeed, Germany's coöperation would be indispensable. This is the reason why Colonel House proposed first of all to visit Berlin. Page's response to this idea was consistent and characteristic. He had no faith in Germany and believed that the existence of Kaiserism was incompatible with the extension of the democratic ideal. Even at this early time—eight months before the outbreak of the World War—he had no enthusiasm for anything in the nature of an alliance, or a "pact," that included Germany as an equal partner. He did, however, have great faith in the coöperation of the English-speaking peoples as a force that would make for permanent peace and international justice.

To Edward M. House

January 2, 1914.

My dear House:

You have set my imagination going. I've been thinking of this thing for months, and now you've given me a fresh start. It can be worked out somehow—doubtless, not in the form that anybody may at first see; but experiment and frank discussion will find a way.

As I think of it, turning it this way and that, there always comes to me just as I am falling to sleep this reflection: the English-speaking peoples now rule the world in all essential facts. They alone and Switzerland have permanent free government. In France there's freedom—but for how long? In Germany and Austria—hardly. In the Scandinavian States—yes, but they are small and exposed as are Belgium and Holland. In the big secure South American States—yes, it's coming. In Japan—? Only the British lands and the United States have secure liberty. They also have the most treasure, the best fighters, the most land, the most ships—the future in fact.

Now, because George Washington warned us against alliances, we've gone on as if an alliance were a kind of smallpox. Suppose there were—let us say for argument's sake—the tighest sort of an alliance, offensive and defensive, between all Britain, colonies and all, and the United States—what would happen? Anything we'd say would go, whether we should say, "Come in out of the wet," or, "Disarm." That might be the beginning of a real world-alliance and union to accomplish certain large results—disarma-

ment, for instance, or arbitration—dozens of good things. . . .

I'm not proposing a program. I'm only thinking out loud. I see little hope of doing anything so long as we choose to be ruled by an obsolete remark made by George Washington.

W. H. P.

From Edward M. House

145 East 35th Street,
New York City.
April 20th, 1914.

DEAR PAGE:

. . . It is our purpose to sail on the *Imperator,* May 16th, and go directly to Germany. I expect to be there a week or more, but Mrs. House will reach London by the 1st or 2nd of June. . . .

Our friend [1] in Washington thinks it is worth while for me to go to Germany, and that determines the matter. The press is shrieking to-day over the Mexican situation, but I hope they will be disappointed. It is not the intention to do anything further for the moment than to blockade the ports, and unless some overt act is made from the North, our troops will not cross the border.

Your friend always,
E. M. HOUSE.

To Edward M. House

London, April 27, 1914.

MY DEAR HOUSE:

Of course you decided wisely to carry out your orig-

[1] Obviously President Wilson.

inal Berlin plan, and you ought never to have had a moment's hesitation, if you did have any hesitation. I do not expect you to produce any visible or immediate results. I hope I am mistaken in this. But you know that the German Government has a well-laid progressive plan for shipbuilding for a certain number of years. I believe that the work has, in fact, already been arranged for. But that has nothing to do with the case. You are going to see what effect you can produce on the mind of a man. Perhaps you will never know just what effect you will produce. Yet the fact that you are who you are, that you make this journey for this especial purpose, that you are everlastingly right—these are enough.

Moreover, you can't ever tell results, nor can you afford to make your plans in this sort of high work with the slightest reference to probable results. That's the bigness and the glory of it. Any ordinary man can, on any ordinary day, go and do a task, the favorable results of which may be foreseen. *That's* easy. The big thing is to go confidently to work on a task, the results of which nobody can possibly foresee —a task so vague and improbable of definite results that small men hesitate. It is in this spirit that very many of the biggest things in history have been done. Wasn't the purchase of Louisiana such a thing? Who'd ever have supposed that that could have been brought about? I applaud your errand and I am eagerly impatient to hear the results. When will *you* get here? I assume that Mrs. House will not go with you to Berlin. No matter so you both turn up here for a good long stay.

I've taken me a little bit of a house about twenty miles out of town whither we are going in July as soon as we can get away from London. I hope to stay

down there till far into October, coming up to London about thrice a week. That's the dull season of the year. It's a charming little country place—big enough for you to visit us. . . .

It will be observed that Colonel House had sailed directly to Germany on a German ship—the *Imperator*. Ambassador Gerard had made preparations for his reception in Berlin, and the American soon had long talks with Admiral von Tirpitz, Falkenhayn, Von Jagow, Solf, and others. Von Bethmann-Hollweg's wife died almost on the day of his arrival in Berlin, so it was impossible for him to see the Chancellor—the man who would have probably been the most receptive to these peace ideas. All the leaders of the government, except Von Tirpitz, gave Colonel House's proposals a respectful if somewhat cynical hearing. Von Tirpitz was openly and demonstratively hostile. The leader of the German Navy simply bristled with antagonism at any suggestion for peace or disarmament or world coöperation. He consumed a large part of the time which Colonel House spent with him denouncing England and all its works. Hatred of the "Island Kingdom" was apparently the consuming passion of his existence. On the whole, Von Tirpitz thus made no attempt to conceal his feeling that the purpose of the House mission was extremely distasteful to him. The other members of the Government, while not so tactlessly hostile, were not particularly encouraging.

House had come to Berlin not merely to talk with the cabinet heads; his goal was the Kaiser himself. But he perceived at once a persistent opposition to his plan. As he was the President's personal representative, and carried a letter from the President to the

Kaiser, an audience could not be refused—indeed, it had already been duly arranged; but there was a quiet opposition to his consorting with the "All Highest" alone. It was not usual, Colonel House was informed, for His Imperial Majesty to discuss such matters except in the presence of a representative of the Foreign Office.

But the American knew that an interview with a third person present would be simply thrown away since his message was intended for the Kaiser's own ears; and ultimately his persistence succeeded. The next Monday would be June 1st—a great day in Germany. It was the occasion of the Schrippenfest, a day which for many years had been set aside for the glorification of the German Army. On that festival, the Kaiser entertained with great pomp representative army officers and representative privates, as well as the diplomatic corps and other distinguished foreigners. Colonel House was invited to attend the Kaiser's luncheon on that occasion, and was informed that, after this function was over, he would have an opportunity of having a private conversation with His Majesty.

The affair took place in the palace at Potsdam. The militarism which Colonel House had felt so oppressively in Berlin society was especially manifest on this occasion. There were two luncheon parties—that of the Kaiser and his officers and guests in the state dining room, and that of the selected private soldiers outside. The Kaiser and the Kaiserin spent a few moments with their humbler subjects, drinking beer with them and passing a few comradely remarks; they then proceeded to the large dining hall and took their places with the gorgeously caparisoned and bemedaled chieftains of the German Army. The whole

proceeding has an historic interest, in that it was the last Schrippenfest held.

When the lunch was finished, the Kaiser took Colonel House aside, and the two men withdrew to the terrace, out of earshot of the rest of the gathering. However, they were not out of sight. For nearly half an hour the Kaiser and the American stood side by side upon the terrace, the German generals, at a respectful distance, watching the proceeding, resentful, puzzled, curious as to what it was all about. The mass of officers watching this meeting little guessed that the purpose of House's visit was to persuade the Kaiser to abandon everything for which the Schrippenfest stood; to enter an international compact with the United States and Great Britain for reducing armaments, to reach an agreement about trade and the treatment of backward peoples, and to form something of a permanent association for the preservation of peace.

The one thing which was apparent to the watchers was that the American was only now and then saying a brief word, but that the Kaiser was, as usual, doing a vast amount of talking. His speech rattled on with the utmost animation, his arms were constantly gesticulating, he would bring one fist down into his palm to register an emphatic point, and enforce certain ideas with a menacing forefinger. At times Colonel House would show slight signs of impatience and interrupt the flow of talk. But the Kaiser was clearly absorbed in the subject under discussion.

The subject that had mainly aroused the Imperial warmth was the "Yellow Peril." For years this had been an obsession with the Kaiser, and he launched into the subject as soon as Colonel House broached

the purpose of his visit. There could be no question of disarmament, the Kaiser vehemently declared, as long as this danger to civilization existed. "We white nations should join hands," he said, "to oppose Japan and the other yellow nations, or some day they will destroy us."

It was with difficulty that Colonel House could get His Majesty away from this subject. Whatever topic he touched upon, the Kaiser would immediately start declaiming on the dangers that faced Europe from the East. His insistence on this accounted partly for the slight signs of impatience which the American showed. He feared that all the time allotted for the interview would be devoted to discussing the Japanese. About another nation, the Kaiser showed almost as much alarm as he did about Japan, and that was Russia. He spoke contemptuously of France and Great Britain as possible enemies, for he apparently had no fear of them. But the size of Russia and the exposed eastern frontier of Germany seemed to appall him. How could Germany join a peace pact, and reduce its army, so long as 175,000,000 Slavs threatened them from this direction?

Another matter that the Kaiser discussed with derision was Mr. Bryan's arbitration treaty. Practically all the great nations had already ratified this treaty except Germany. The Kaiser now laughed at the treaties and pooh-poohed Bryan. Germany, he declared, would never accept such an arbitration plan. Colonel House had particular cause to remember this part of the conversation three years afterwards, when the United States declared war on Germany. The outstanding feature of the Bryan treaty was the clause

which pledged the high contracting parties not to go to war without taking a breathing spell of one year in which to think the matter over.

Had Germany adopted this treaty, the United States, in April, 1917, after Germany had presented a *casus belli* by resuming unrestricted submarine warfare, could not have gone to war. We should have been obliged to wait a year, or until April, 1918, before engaging in hostilities. That is, an honorable observance of this Bryan treaty by the United States would have meant that Germany would have starved Great Britain into surrender, and crushed Europe with her army. Had the Kaiser, on this June afternoon, not notified Colonel House that Germany would not accept this treaty, but, instead, had notified him that he would accept it, William II might now be sitting on the throne of a victorious Germany, with Europe for a footstool.

Despite the Kaiser's hostile attitude towards these details, his general reception of the President's proposals was not outwardly unfriendly. Perhaps he was sincere, perhaps not; yet the fact is that he manifested more cordiality to this somewhat vague "get-together" proposal than had any of his official advisers. He encouraged Colonel House to visit London, talk the matter over with British statesmen, and then return to Berlin.

"The last thing," he said, "that Germany wants is war. We are getting to be a great commercial country. In a few years Germany will be a rich country, like England and the United States. We don't want a war to interfere with our progress."

Any peace suggestion that was compatible with German safety, he said, would be entertained. Yet his parting words were not reassuring.

"Every nation in Europe," he said, "has its bayonets pointed at Germany. But——"—and with this he gave a proud and smiling glance at the glistening representatives of his army gathered on this brilliant occasion—"we are ready!"

Colonel House left Berlin, not particularly hopeful; the Kaiser impressed him as a man of unstable nervous organization—as one who was just hovering on the border land of insanity. Certainly, this was no man to be entrusted with such powers as the American had witnessed that day at Potsdam. Dangerous as the Kaiser was, however, he did not seem to Colonel House to be as great a menace to mankind as were his military advisers. The American came away from Berlin with the conviction that the most powerful force in Germany was the militaristic clique, and second, the Hohenzollern dynasty. He has always insisted that this represented the real precedence in power. So long as the Kaiser was obedient to the will of militarism, so long could he maintain his standing. He was confident, however, that the militaristic oligarchy was determined to have its will, and would dethrone the Kaiser the moment he showed indications of taking a course that would lead to peace. Colonel House was also convinced that this militaristic oligarchy was determined on war. The coolness with which it listened to his proposals, the attempts it made to keep him from seeing the Kaiser alone, its repeated efforts to break up the conversation after it had begun, all pointed to the inevitable tragedy. The fact that the Kaiser expressed a wish to discuss the matter again, after Colonel House had sounded London, was the one hopeful feature of an otherwise discouraging experience, and accounts for the tone of faint optimism in his letters describing the visit.

From Edward M. House

Paris, June 3, 1914.

DEAR PAGE:

I had a satisfactory talk with the Kaiser on Monday. I have now seen everyone worthwhile in Germany except the Chancellor. I am ready now for London. Perhaps you had better prepare the way. The Kaiser knows I am to see them, and I have arranged to keep him in touch with results—if there are any. We must work quickly after I arrive, for it may be advisable for me to return to Germany, and I am counting on sailing for home July 15th or 28th. . . . I am eager to see you and tell you what I know.

Yours,
E. M. H.

The political situation in Great Britain was greatly confused. The country was in a state approaching civil war on the question of Home Rule for Ireland; the suffragettes were threatening to dynamite the Houses of Parliament; and the eternal struggle between the Liberal and the Conservative elements was raging with unprecedented virulence. A European war was far from everybody's mind. It was this utter inability to grasp the realities of the European situation which proved the main impediment to Colonel House's work in England. He met all the important people—Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Edward Grey, and others. With them he discussed his "pact" proposal in great detail. Though the British statesmen did not say so definitely, the impression was conveyed that the mission on which Colonel

House was engaged was an unnecessary one—a preparation against a danger that did not exist.

The fact that the British statesmen entertained so little apprehension of a German attack may possibly be a reflection on their judgment; yet Colonel House's visit has great historical value, for the experience afterward convinced him that Great Britain had had no part in bringing on the European war, and that Germany was solely responsible. It certainly should have put the Wilson Administration right on this all-important point, when the great storm broke.

The most vivid recollection which the British statesmen whom Colonel House met retain of his visit, was his consternation at the spirit that had confronted him everywhere in Germany. The four men most interested—Sir Edward Grey, Sir William Tyrrell, Mr. Page, and Colonel House—met at luncheon in the American Embassy a few days after President Wilson's emissary had returned from Berlin. Colonel House could talk of little except the preparations for war which were manifest on every hand.

"I feel as though I had been living near a mighty electric dynamo," Colonel House told his friends. "The whole of Germany is charged with electricity. Everybody's nerves are tense. It needs only a spark to set the whole thing off."

The "spark" came two weeks afterward with the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand.

"It is all a bad business," Colonel House wrote to Page when war broke out, "and just think how near we came to making such a catastrophe impossible! If England had moved a little faster and had let me go back to Germany, the thing, perhaps, could have been done."

To which Page at once replied:

"No, no, no—no power on earth could have prevented it. The German militarism, which is *the* crime of the last fifty years, has been working for this for twenty-five years. It is the logical result of their spirit and enterprise and doctrine. It *had* to come. But, of course, they chose the wrong time and the wrong issue. Militarism has no judgment. Don't let your conscience be worried. You did all that any mortal man could do. But nobody could have done anything effective.

"We've got to see to it that this system doesn't grow up again. That's all."

In the latter part of July the Pages took a small house at Ockham, in Surrey, and here they spent the fateful week that preceded the outbreak of war. The Ambassador's emotions on this event are reflected in a memorandum written on Sunday, August 2nd—a day that was full of negotiations, ultimatums, and other precursors of the approaching struggle.

Bachelor's Farm, Ockham, Surrey.
Sunday, August 2, 1914.

The Grand Smash is come. Last night the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg handed the Russian Government a declaration of war. To-day the German Government asked the United States to take its diplomatic and consular business in Russia in hand. Herrick, our Ambassador in Paris, has already taken the German interests there.

It is reported in London to-day that the Germans have invaded Luxemburg and France.

Troops were marching through London at one

o'clock this morning. Colonel Squier [1] came out to luncheon. He sees no way for England to keep out of it. There is no way. If she keep out, Germany will take Belgium and Holland, France would be betrayed, and England would be accused of forsaking her friends.

People came to the Embassy all day to-day (Sunday), to learn how they can get to the United States—a rather hard question to answer. I thought several times of going in, but Greene and Squier said there was no need of it. People merely hoped we might tell them what we can't tell them.

Returned travelers from Paris report indescribable confusion—people unable to obtain beds and fighting for seats in railway carriages.

It's been a hard day here. I have a lot (not a big lot either) of routine work on my desk which I meant to do. But it has been impossible to get my mind off this Great Smash. It holds one in spite of oneself. I revolve it and revolve it—of course getting nowhere.

. . . . . .

The United States is the only great Power wholly out of it. The United States, most likely, therefore, will be able to play a helpful and historic part at its end. It will give President Wilson, no doubt, a great opportunity. It will probably help us politically and it will surely help us economically.

The possible consequences stagger the imagination. Germany has staked everything on her ability to win primacy. England and France (to say nothing of Russia) really ought to give her a drubbing. If they

[1] At this time American military attaché.

do not, this side of the world will henceforth be German. If they do flog Germany, Germany will for a long time be in discredit.

I walked out in the night a while ago. The stars are bright, the night is silent, the country quiet—as quiet as peace itself. Millions of men are in camp and on warships. Will they have to fight and many of them die—to untangle this network of treaties and alliances and to blow off huge debts with gunpowder so that the world may start again?

A hurried picture of the events of the next seven days is given in the following letter to the President:

To the President

London, Sunday, August 9, 1914.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

God save us! What a week it has been! Last Sunday I was down here at the cottage I have taken for the summer—an hour out of London—uneasy because of the apparent danger and of what Sir Edward Grey had told me. During the day people began to go to the Embassy, but not in great numbers—merely to ask what they should do in case of war. The Secretary whom I had left in charge on Sunday telephoned me every few hours and laughingly told funny experiences with nervous women who came in and asked absurd questions. Of course, we all knew the grave danger that war might come but nobody could by the wildest imagination guess at what awaited us.

On Monday I was at the Embassy earlier than I think I have ever been there before and every member of the staff was already on duty. Before break-

fast time the place was filled—packed like sardines. This was two days before war was declared. There was no chance to talk to individuals, such was the jam. I got on a chair and explained that I had already telegraphed to Washington—on Saturday—suggesting the sending of money and ships, and asking them to be patient. I made a speech to them several times during the day, and kept the Secretaries doing so at intervals. More than 2,000 Americans crowded into those offices (which are not large) that day. We were kept there till two o'clock in the morning. The Embassy has not been closed since.

. . . . . .

Tuesday the crowd at the Embassy was still great but smaller. The big space at the Savoy Hotel gave them room to talk to one another and to get relief for immediate needs. By that time I had accepted the volunteer services of five or six men to help us explain to the people—and they have all worked manfully day and night. We now have an orderly organization at four places: The Embassy, the Consul-General's Office, the Savoy, and the American Society in London, and everything is going well. Those two first days, there was, of course, great confusion. Crazy men and weeping women were imploring and cursing and demanding—God knows it was bedlam turned loose.

I have been called a man of the greatest genius for an emergency by some, by others a damned fool, by others every epithet between these extremes. Men shook English banknotes in my face and demanded United States money and swore our Government and its agents ought all to be shot. Women expected me to hand them steamship tickets home. When some found out that they could not get tickets on the trans-

ports (which they assumed would sail the next day) they accused me of favoritism. These absurd experiences will give you a hint of the panic. But now it has worked out all right, thanks to the Savoy Committee and other helpers.

. . . . . .

Then came the declaration of war, most dramatically. Tuesday night, five minutes after the ultimatum had expired, the Admiralty telegraphed to the fleet "Go." In a few minutes the answer came back "Off." Soldiers began to march through the city going to the railway stations. An indescribable crowd so blocked the streets about the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Foreign Office, that at one o'clock in the morning I had to drive in my car by other streets to get home.

The next day the German Embassy was turned over to me. I went to see the German Ambassador at three o'clock in the afternoon. He came down in his pyjamas, a crazy man. I feared he might literally go mad. He is of the anti-war party and he had done his best and utterly failed. This interview was one of the most pathetic experiences of my life. The poor man had not slept for several nights.

Then came the crowds of frightened Germans, afraid that they would be arrested. They besieged the German Embassy and our Embassy. I put one of our naval officers in the German Embassy, put the United States seal on the door to protect it, and we began business there, too. Our naval officer has moved in—sleeps there. He has an assistant, a stenographer, a messenger; and I gave him the German automobile and chauffeur and two English servants that

were left there. He has the job well in hand now, under my and Laughlin's supervision. But this has brought still another new lot of diplomatic and governmental problems—a lot of them. Three enormous German banks in London have, of course, been closed. Their managers pray for my aid. Howling women come and say their innocent German husbands have been arrested as spies. English, Germans, Americans —everybody has daughters and wives and invalid grandmothers alone in Germany. In God's name, they ask, what can I do for them? Here come stacks of letters sent under the impression that I can send them to Germany. But the German business is already well in hand and I think that will take little of my own time and will give little trouble. I shall send a report about it in detail to the Department the very first day I can find time to write it. In spite of the effort of the English Government to remain at peace with Austria, I fear I shall yet have the Austrian Embassy too. But I can attend to it.

Now, however, comes the financial job of wisely using the $300,000 which I shall have to-morrow. I am using Mr. Chandler Anderson as counsel, of course. I have appointed a Committee—Skinner, the Consul-General, Lieut.-Commander McCrary of our Navy, Kent of the Bankers Trust Company, New York, and one other man yet to be chosen—to advise, after investigation, about every proposed expenditure. Anderson has been at work all day to-day drawing up proper forms, etc., to fit the Department's very excellent instructions. I have the feeling that more of that money may be wisely spent in helping to get people off the Continent (except in France, where they seem admirably to be managing it, under Herrick) than is

immediately needed in England. All this merely to show you the diversity and multiplicity of the job.

. . . . . .

. . . All London has been awake for a week. Soldiers are marching day and night; immense throngs block the streets about the government offices. But they are all very orderly. Every day Germans are arrested on suspicion; and several of them have committed suicide. Yesterday one poor American woman yielded to the excitement and cut her throat. I find it hard to get about much. People stop me on the street, follow me to luncheon, grab me as I come out of any committee meeting—to know my opinion of this or that—how can they get home? Will such-and-such a boat fly the American flag? Why did I take the German Embassy? I have to fight my way about and rush to an automobile. I have had to buy me a second one to keep up the racket. Buy?—no—only bargain for it, for I have not any money. But everybody is considerate, and that makes no matter for the moment. This little cottage in an out-of-the-way place, twenty-five miles from London, where I am trying to write and sleep, has been found by people to-day, who come in automobiles to know how they may reach their sick kinspeople in Germany. I have not had a bath for three days: as soon as I got in the tub, the telephone rang an "urgent" call!

Upon my word, if one could forget the awful tragedy, all this experience would be worth a lifetime of commonplace. One surprise follows another so rapidly that one loses all sense of time: it seems an age since last Sunday.

I shall never forget Sir Edward Grey's telling me of the ultimatum—while he wept; nor the poor Ger-

man Ambassador who has lost in his high game—almost a demented man; nor the King as he declaimed at me for half-an-hour and threw up his hands and said, "My God, Mr. Page, what else could we do?" Nor the Austrian Ambassador's wringing his hands and weeping and crying out, "My dear Colleague, my dear Colleague."

. . . . . .

And this awful tragedy moves on to—what? We do not know what is really happening, so strict is the censorship. But it seems inevitable to me that Germany will be beaten, that the horrid period of alliances and armaments will not come again, that England will gain even more of the earth's surface, that Russia may next play the menace; that all Europe (as much as survives) will be bankrupt; that relatively we shall be immensely stronger financially and politically—there must surely come many great changes—very many, yet undreamed of. Be ready; for you will be called on to compose this huge quarrel. I thank Heaven for many things—first, the Atlantic Ocean; second, that you refrained from war in Mexico; third, that we kept our treaty—the canal tolls victory, I mean. Now, when all this half of the world will suffer the unspeakable brutalization of war, we shall preserve our moral strength, our political powers, and our ideals.

God save us!

W. H. P.

CHAPTER VII

ENGLAND UNDER THE STRESS OF WAR

THE months following the outbreak of the war were busy ones for the American Embassy in London. The Embassies of all the great Powers with which Great Britain was contending were handed over to Page, and the citizens of these countries—Germany, Austria, Turkey—who found themselves stranded in England, were practically made his wards. It is a constant astonishment to his biographer that, during all the labor and distractions of this period, Page should have found time to write long letters describing the disturbing scene. There are scores of them, all penned in the beautiful copper-plate handwriting that shows no signs of excitement or weariness, but is in itself an evidence of mental poise and of the sure grip which Page had upon the evolving drama. From the many sent in these autumn and early winter months the following selections are made:

To Edward M. House

September 22nd, 1914.

My dear House:

When the day of settlement comes, the settlement must make sure that the day of militarism is done and can come no more. If sheer brute force is to rule the world, it will not be worth living in. If German bureaucratic brute force could conquer Europe, pres-

ently it would try to conquer the United States; and we should all go back to the era of war as man's chief industry and back to the domination of kings by divine right. It seems to me, therefore, that the Hohenzollern idea must perish—be utterly strangled in the making of peace.

Just how to do this, it is not yet easy to say. If the German defeat be emphatic enough and dramatic enough, the question may answer itself—how's the best way to be rid of the danger of the recurrence of a military bureaucracy? But in any event, this thing must be killed forever—somehow. I think that a firm insistence on this is the main task that mediation will bring. The rest will be corollaries of this.

The danger, of course, as all the world is beginning to fear, is that the Kaiser, after a local victory—especially if he should yet take Paris—will propose peace, saying that he dreads the very sight of blood—propose peace in time, as he will hope, to save his throne, his dynasty, his system. That will be a dangerous day. The horror of war will have a tendency to make many persons in the countries of the Allies accept it. All the peace folk in the world will say "Accept it!" But if he and his throne and his dynasty and his system be saved, in twenty-five years the whole job must be done over again. . . .

The diplomatic work proper brings fewer difficulties than you would guess. New subjects and new duties come with great rapidity, but they soon fall into formulas—at least into classes. We shall have no sharp crises nor grave difficulties so long as our government and this government keep their more than friendly relations. I see Sir Edward Grey almost every day. We talk of many things—all phases of one vast wreck; and all the clear-cut points that come up I re-

port by telegraph. To-day the talk was of American cargoes in British ships and the machinery they have set up here for fair settlement. Then of Americans applying for enlistment in Canadian regiments. "If sheer brute force conquer Europe," said he, "the United States will be the only country where life will be worth living; and in time you will have to fight against it, too, if it conquer Europe. . . ."

I hear nothing but satisfaction with our neutrality tight-rope walk. I think we are keeping it here, by close attention to our work and by silence.

Our volunteer and temporary aids are doing well —especially the army and navy officers. We now occupy three work places: (1) the over-crowded embassy; (2) a suite of offices around the corner where the ever-lengthening list of inquiries for persons is handled and where an army officer pays money to persons whose friends have deposited it for them with the Government in Washington—just now at the rate of about $15,000 a day; and (3) two great rooms at the Savoy Hotel, where the admirable relief committee (which meets all trains that bring people from the Continent) gives aid to the needy and helps people to get tickets home. They have this week helped about 400 with more or less money—after full investigation.

At the Embassy a secretary remains till bed-time, which generally means till midnight; and I go back there for an hour or two every night.

The financial help we give to German and Austrian subjects (poor devils) is given, of course, at their embassies, where we have men—our men—in charge. Each of these governments accepted my offer to give our Ambassadors (Gerard and Penfield) a sum of money to help Americans if I would set aside an equal

sum to help their people here. The German fund that I thus began with was $50,000; the Austrian, $25,000. All this and more will be needed before the war ends. —All this activity is kept up with scrupulous attention to British rules and regulations. In fact, we are helping this government much in the management of these "alien enemies," as they call them.

The soldiers here complained for weeks in private about the lethargy of the people—the slowness of men to enlist. But they seemed to me to complain with insufficient reason. For now they come by thousands. They do need more men in the field, and they may conscript them, but I doubt the necessity. But I run across such incidents as these: I met the Dowager Countess of D—— yesterday—a woman of sixty-five, as tall as I and erect herself as a soldier, who might be taken for a woman of forty, prematurely gray. "I had five sons in the Boer War. I have three in this war. I do not know where any one of them is." Mrs. Page's maid is talking of leaving her. "My two brothers have gone to the war and perhaps I ought to help their wives and children." The Countess and the maid are of the same blood, each alike unconquerable. My chauffeur has talked all day about the naval battle in which five German ships were lately sunk.[1] He reminded me of the night two months ago when he drove Mrs. Page and me to dine with Sir John and Lady Jellicoe—Jellicoe now, you know, being in command of the British fleet.

This Kingdom has settled down to war as its one great piece of business now in hand, and it is impossible, as the busy, burdensome days pass, to pick out events or impressions that one can be sure are worth

[1] Evidently the battle of Heligoland Bight of August 28, 1914.

writing. For instance a soldier—a man in the War Office—told me to-day that Lord Kitchener had just told him that the war may last for several years. That, I confess, seems to me very improbable, and (what is of more importance) it is not the notion held by most men whose judgment I respect. But all the military men say it will be long. . . .

. . . Food here is practically as cheap as it was three months ago and the sea routes are all open to England and practically all closed to Germany. The ultimate result, of course, will be Germany's defeat. But the British are now going about the business of war as if they knew they would continue it indefinitely.

The grim efficiency of their work even in small details was illustrated to-day by the Government's informing us that a German handy man, whom the German Ambassador left at his Embassy, with the English Government's consent, is a spy—that he sends verbal messages to Germany by women who are permitted to go home, and that they have found letters written by him sewed in some of these women's undergarments! This man has been at work there every day under the two very good men whom I have put in charge there and who have never suspected him. How on earth they found this out simply passes my understanding. Fortunately it doesn't bring any embarrassment to us; he was not in our pay and he was left by the German Ambassador with the British Government's consent, to take care of the house.

The Germans have far more than their match in resources and in shrewdness and—in character. As the bloody drama unfolds itself, the hollow pretense and essential barbarity of Prussian militarism become plainer and plainer: there is no doubt of that. And

so does the invincibility of this race. A well-known Englishman told me to-day that his three sons, his son-in-law, and half his office men are in the military service, "where they belong in a time like this." The lady who once so sharply criticized this gentleman to Mrs. Page has a son and a brother in the army in France. It makes you take a fresh grip on your eyelids to hear either of these talk. In fact, the strain on one's emotions, day in and day out, makes one wonder if the world is real—or is this a vast dream? . . . No experience seems normal. A vast organization is working day and night down town receiving Belgian refugees. They become the guests of the English. They are assigned to people's homes, to boarding houses, to institutions. They are taking care of them—this government and this people are. I do not recall when one nation ever did another whole nation just such a hospitable service as this. You can't see that work going on and remain unmoved. An old woman who has an income of $15 a week decided that she could live on $7.50. She buys milk with the other $7.50 and goes to meet every train at one of the big stations with a basket filled with baby bottles, and she gives milk to every hungry-looking baby she sees. Our American committeeman, Hoover, saw her in trouble the other day and asked her what was the matter. She explained that the police would no longer admit her to the platform because she didn't belong to any relief committee. He took her to headquarters and said: "Do you see this good old lady? She puts you and me and everybody else to shame—do you understand?" The old lady now gets to the platform. Hoover himself gave $5,000 for helping stranded Americans and he goes

to the trains to meet them, while the war has stopped his big business and his big income. This is a sample of the noble American end of the story.

These are the saving class of people to whom life becomes a bore unless they can help somebody. There's just such a fellow in Brussels—you may have heard of him, for his name is Whitlock. Stories of his showing himself a man come out of that closed-up city every week. To a really big man, it doesn't matter whether his post is a little post or a big post but, if I were President, I'd give Whitlock a big post. There's another fellow somewhere in Germany—a consul—of whom I never heard till the other day. But people have taken to coming in my office—English ladies—who wish to thank "you and your great government" for the courage and courtesy of this consul.[1] Stories about him will follow. Herrick, too, in Paris, somehow causes Americans and English and even Guatemalans who come along to go out of their way to say what he has done for them. Now there is a quality in the old woman with the baby bottles, and in the consul and in Whitlock and Hoover and Herrick and this English nation which adopts the Belgians—a quality that is invincible. When folk like these come down the road, I respectfully do obeisance to them. And—it's this kind of folk that the Germans have run up against. I thank Heaven I'm of their race and blood.

The whole world is bound to be changed as a result of this war. If Germany should win, our Monroe Doctrine would at once be shot in two, and we should have to get "out of the sun." The military party is a party of conquest—absolutely. If England wins,

[1] The reference in all probability is to Mr. Charles L. Hoover, at that time American Consul at Carlsbad.

as of course she will, it'll be a bigger and a stronger England, with no strong enemy in the world, with her Empire knit closer than ever—India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt; under obligations to and in alliance with Russia! England will not need our friendship as much as she now needs it; and there may come governments here that will show they do not. In any event, you see, the world will be changed. . . .

All of which means that it is high time we were constructing a foreign service. First of all, Congress ought to make it possible to have half a dozen under-secretaries—men who, after service in the Department, could go out as Ministers and Ambassadors; it ought generously to reorganize the whole thing. It ought to have a competent study made of the foreign offices of other governments. Of course it ought to get room to work in. Then it ought at once to give its Ambassadors and Ministers homes and dignified treatment. We've got to play a part in the world whether we wish to or not. Think of these things.

The blindest great force in this world to-day is the Prussian War Party—blind and stupid.—Well, and the most weary man in London just at this hour is

Your humble servant,
W. H. P.

but he'll be all right in the morning.

To Arthur W. Page

[Undated]

DEAR ARTHUR:

. . . I recall one night when we were dining at Sir John Jellicoe's, he told me that the Admiralty

never slept—that he had a telephone by his bed every night. . . .

"Did it ever ring?" I asked.

"No; but it will."

You begin to see pretty clearly how English history has been made and makes itself. This afternoon Lady S—— told your mother of her three sons, one on a warship in the North Sea, another with the army in France, and a third in training to go. "How brave you all are!" said your mother, and her answer was: "They belong to their country; we can't do anything else." One of the daughters-in-law of the late Lord Salisbury came to see me to find out if I could make an inquiry about her son who was reported "missing" after the battle of Mons. She was dry-eyed, calm, self-restrained—very grateful for the effort I promised to make; but a Spartan woman would have envied her self-possession. It turned out that her son was dead.

You hear experiences like these almost every day. These are the kinds of women and the kinds of men that have made the British Empire and the English race. You needn't talk of decadence. All their great qualities are in them here and now. I believe that half the young men who came to Katharine's [1] dances last winter and who used to drop in at the house once in a while are dead in France already. They went as a matter of course. This is the reason they are going to win. Now these things impress you, as they come to you day by day.

. . . . . .

This government doesn't now let anybody carry any food away. But to-day they consented on condition

[1] Miss Katherine A. Page, the Ambassador's daughter.

I'd receive the food (for the Belgians) and consign it to Whitlock. This is their way of keeping it out of German hands—have the Stars and Stripes, so to speak, to cover every bag of flour and of salt. That's only one of 1,000 queer activities that I engage in. I have a German princess's [1] jewels in our safe—$100,000 worth of them in my keeping; I have an old English nobleman's check for $40,000 to be sent to men who have been building a house for his daughter in Dresden—to be sent as soon as the German Government agrees not to arrest the lady for debt. I have sent Miss Latimer [2] over to France to bring an Austrian baby eight months old whose mother will take it to the United States and bring it up an American citizen! The mother can't go and get it for fear the French might detain her; I've got the English Government's permission for the family to go to the United States. Harold [3] is in Belgium, trying to get a group of English ladies home who went there to nurse wounded English and Belgians and whom the Germans threaten to kidnap and transport to German hospitals—every day a dozen new kinds of jobs.

. . . . . .

To the President

[Undated.]

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

When England, France, and Russia agreed the other day not to make peace separately, that cooked the Kaiser's goose. They'll wear him out. Since

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[1] Princess Lichnowsky, wife of the German Ambassador to Great Britain.

[2] Private Secretary to Mrs. Page.

[3] Mr. Harold Fowler, the Ambassador's Secretary.

England thus has Frenchmen and Russians bound, the Allies are strengthened at their only weak place. That done, England is now going deliberately, methodically, patiently to do the task. Even a fortnight ago, the people of this Kingdom didn't realize all that the war means to them. But the fever is rising now. The wounded are coming back, the dead are mourned, and the agony of hearing only that such-and-such a man is missing—these are having a prodigious effect. The men I meet now say in a matter-of-fact way: "Oh, yes! we'll get 'em, of course; the only question is, how long it will take us and how many of us it will cost. But no matter, we'll get 'em."

. . . . . .

To Edward M. House

October 11, 1914.

DEAR HOUSE:

There is absolutely nothing to write. It's war, war, war all the time; no change of subject; and, if you changed with your tongue, you couldn't change in your thought; war, war, war—"for God's sake find out if my son is dead or a prisoner"; rumors—they say that two French generals were shot for not supporting French, and then they say only one; and people come who have helped take the wounded French from the field and they won't even talk, it is so horrible; and a lady says that her own son (wounded) told her that when a man raised up in the trench to fire, the stench was so awful that it made him sick for an hour; and the poor Belgians come here by the tens of thousands, and special trains bring the English wounded; and the newspapers tell little or nothing—every day's reports

like the preceding days'; and yet nobody talks about anything else.

. . . . . .

Meantime this invincible race is doing this revolutionary task marvelously—volunteering; trying to buy arms in the United States (a Pittsburgh manufacturer is now here trying to close a bargain with the War Office); [1] knitting socks and mufflers; taking in all the poor Belgians; stopping all possible expenditure; darkening London at night; doing every conceivable thing to win as if they had been waging this war always and meant to do nothing else for the rest of their lives—and not the slightest doubt about the result and apparently indifferent how long it lasts or how much it costs.

. . . . . .

We here don't know what you think or what you know at home; we haven't yet any time to read United States newspapers, which come very, very late; nobody writes us real letters (or the censor gets 'em, perhaps!); and so the war, the war, the war is the one thing that holds our minds.

We have taken a house for the Chancery [2]—almost the size of my house in Grosvenor Square—for the same sum as rent that the landlord proposed hereafter to charge us for the old hole where we've been for twenty-nine years. For the first time Uncle Sam has a decent place in London. We've five times as much

[1] Probably a reference to Mr. Charles M. Schwab, President of the Bethlehem Steel Company, who was in London at this time on this errand.

[2] No. 4 Grosvenor Gardens.

room and ten times as much work. Now—just this last week or two—I get off Sundays: that's doing well. And I don't now often go back at night. So, you see, we've much to be thankful for.—Shall we insure against Zeppelins? That's what everybody's asking. I told the Spanish Ambassador yesterday that I am going to ask the German Government for instructions about insuring their Embassy here!

Write and send some news. I saw an American today who says he's going home to-morrow. "Cable me," said I, "if you find the continent where it used to be."

Faithfully yours,
WALTER H. PAGE.

To Arthur W. Page

London, November 6, 1914.

DEAR ARTHUR:

Those excellent photographs, those excellent apples, those excellent cigars—thanks. I'm thinking of sending Kitty [1] over again. They all spell and smell and taste of home—of the U. S. A. Even the messenger herself seems Unitedstatesy, and that's a good quality, I assure you. She's told us less news than you'd think she might for so long a journey and so long a visit; but that's the way with us all. And, I dare say, if it were all put together it would make a pretty big news-budget. And luckily for us (I often think we are among the luckiest families in the world) all she says is quite cheerful. It's a wonderful report she makes of County Line [2]—the country, the place,

[1] Miss Katherine A. Page had just returned from a visit to the United States.

[2] Mr. Arthur W. Page's country home on Long Island.

the house, and its inhabitants. Maybe, praise God, I'll see it myself some day—it and them.

But—but—I don't know when and can't guess out of this vast fog of war and doom. The worst of it is nobody knows just what is happening. I have, for an example, known for a week of the blowing up of a British dreadnaught [1]—thousands of people know it privately—and yet it isn't published! Such secrecy makes you fear there may be other and even worse secrets. But I don't really believe there are. What I am trying to say is, so far as news (and many other things) go, we are under a military rule.

It's beginning to wear on us badly. It presses down, presses down, presses down in an indescribable way. All the people you see have lost sons or brothers; mourning becomes visible over a wider area all the time; people talk of nothing else; all the books are about the war; ordinary social life is suspended—people are visibly growing older. And there are some aspects of it that are incomprehensible. . . . There must already be a total of 2,000,000 killed. Nothing like that has ever happened before in the history of the world. A flood or a fire or a wreck which has killed 500 has often shocked all mankind. Yet we know of this enormous slaughter and (in a way) are not greatly moved. I don't know of a better measure of the brutalizing effect of war—it's bringing us to take a new and more inhuman standard to measure events by.

As for any political or economic reckoning—that's beyond any man's ability yet. I see strings of incomprehensible figures that some economist or other now and then puts in the papers, summing up the loss in

[1] Evidently the *Audacious,* sunk by mine off the North of Ireland, October 27, 1914.

pounds sterling. But that means nothing because we have no proper measure of it. If a man lose $10 or $10,000 we can grasp that. But when nations shoot away so many million pounds sterling every day—that means nothing to me. I do know that there's going to be no money on this side the world for a long time to buy American securities. The whole world is going to be hard up in consequence of the bankruptcy of these nations, the inestimable destruction of property, and the loss of productive men. I fancy that such a change will come in the economic and financial readjustment of the world as nobody can yet guess at. —Are Americans studying these things? It is not only South-American trade; it is all sorts of manufacturers; it is financial influence—if we can quit spending and wasting, and husband our earnings. There's no telling the enormous advantages we shall gain if we are wise.

. . . . . .

When's it going to end? Everybody who ought to know says at the earliest next year—next summer. Many say in two years. As for me, I don't know. I don't see how it can end soon. Neither can lick the other to a frazzle and neither can afford to give up till it is completely licked. This way of living in trenches and fighting a month at a time in one place is a new thing in warfare. Many a man shoots a cannon all day for a month without seeing a single enemy. There are many wounded men back here who say they haven't seen a single German. When the trenches become so full of dead men that the living can't stay there longer, they move back to other trenches. So it goes on. Each side has several more million men to lose. What the end will be—I mean

when it will come, I don't see how to guess. The Allies are obliged to win; they have more food and more money, and in the long run, more men. But the German fighting machine is by far the best organization ever made—not the best men, but the best organization; and the whole German people believe what the woman writes whose letter I send you. It'll take a long time to beat it.

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

To Ralph W. Page [1]

London, Sunday, November 15, 1914.

DEAR RALPH:

You were very good to sit down in Greensboro', or anywhere else, and to write me a fine letter. Do that often. You say there's nothing to do now in the Sandhills. Write us letters: that's a fair job!

God save us, we need 'em. We need anything from the sane part of the world to enable us to keep our balance. One of the commonest things you hear about now is the insanity of a good number of the poor fellows who come back from the trenches as well as of a good many Belgians. The sights and sounds they've experienced unhinge their reason. If this war keep up long enough—and it isn't going to end soon—people who have had no sight of it will go crazy, too—the continuous thought of it, the inability to get away from it by any device whatever—all this tells on us all. Letters, then, plenty of them—let 'em come.

You are in a peaceful land. The war is a long, long way off. You suffer nothing worse than a little idle-

[1] Of Pinehurst, North Carolina, the Ambassador's oldest son.

ness and a little poverty. They are nothing. I hope (and believe) that you get enough to eat. Be content, then. Read the poets, improve a piece of land, play with the baby, learn golf. That's the happy and philosophic and fortunate life in these times of world madness.

As for the continent of Europe—forget it. We have paid far too much attention to it. It has ceased to be worth it. And now it's of far less value to us—and will be for the rest of your life—than it has ever been before. An ancient home of man, the home, too, of beautiful things—buildings, pictures, old places, old traditions, dead civilizations—the place where man rose from barbarism to civilization—it is now bankrupt, its best young men dead, its system of politics and of government a failure, its social structure enslaving and tyrannical—it has little help for us. The American spirit, which is the spirit that concerns itself with making life better for the whole mass of men—that's at home at its best with us. The whole future of the race is in the new countries—our country chiefly. This grows on one more and more and more. The things that are best worth while are on our side of the ocean. And we've got all the bigger job to do because of this violent demonstration of the failure of continental Europe. It's gone on living on a false basis till its elements got so mixed that it has simply blown itself to pieces. It is a great convulsion of nature, as an earthquake or a volcano is. Human life there isn't worth what a yellow dog's life is worth in Moore County. Don't bother yourself with the continent of Europe any more—except to learn the value of a real democracy and the benefits it can confer precisely in proportion to the extent to which men trust to it.

Did you ever read my Address delivered before the Royal Institution of Great Britain?[1] I enclose a copy. Now that's my idea of the very milk of the word. To come down to daily, deadly things—this upheaval is simply infernal. Parliament opened the other day and half the old lords that sat in their robes had lost their heirs and a larger part of the members of the House wore khaki. To-morrow they will vote $1,125,000,000 for war purposes. They had already voted $500,000,000. They'll vote more, and more, and more, if necessary. They are raising a new army of 2,000,000 men. Every man and every dollar they have will go if necessary. That's what I call an invincible people. The Kaiser woke up the wrong passenger. But for fifty years the continent won't be worth living on. My heavens! what bankruptcy will follow death!

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

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[1] On June 12, 1914. The title of the address was "Some Aspects of the American Democracy."

CHAPTER VIII

"WAGING NEUTRALITY"

THE foregoing letters sufficiently portray Page's attitude toward the war; they also show the extent to which he suffered from the daily tragedy. The great burdens placed upon the Embassy in themselves would have exhausted a physical frame that had never been particularly robust; but more disintegrating than these was the mental distress—the constant spectacle of a civilization apparently bent upon its own destruction. Indeed, there were probably few men in Europe upon whom the war had a more depressing effect. In the first few weeks the Ambassador perceptibly grew older; his face became more deeply lined, his hair became grayer, his body thinner, his step lost something of its quickness, his shoulders began to stoop, and his manner became more and more abstracted.

"In those first few weeks," says Mr. Irwin Laughlin, Page's most important assistant, "he acted like a man who was carrying on his shoulders all the sins and burdens of the world. I know no man who seemed to realize so poignantly the misery and sorrow of it all. The sight of an England which he loved bleeding to death in defense of the things in which he most believed was a grief that seemed to be saping his very life."

Page's associates, however, noted a change for the better after the Battle of the Marne. Except to his

most intimate companions he said little, for he represented a nation that was "neutral"; but the defeat of the Germans added liveliness to his step, gave a keener sparkle to his eye, and even brought back some of his old familiar gayety of spirit. One day the Ambassador was lunching with Mr. Laughlin and one or two other friends.

"We did pretty well in that Battle of the Marne, didn't we?" he said.

"Isn't that remark slightly unneutral, Mr. Ambassador?" asked Mr. Laughlin.

At this a roar of laughter went up from the table that could be heard for a considerable distance.

Yet greatly as his sympathies from the first day of the war were enlisted on the side of the Allies, there was no diplomat in the American service who was more "neutral" in the technical sense. "Neutral!" Page once exclaimed. "There's nothing in the world so neutral as this embassy. Neutrality takes up all our time." When he made this remark he was, as he himself used to say, "the German Ambassador to Great Britain." And he was performing the duties of this post with the most conscientious fidelity.

Page was prepared to observe all the traditional rules of neutrality, to insist on American rights with the British Government, and to do full legal justice to the Germans, but he declined to abrogate his conscience where his personal judgment of the rights and wrongs of the conflict were concerned. "Neutrality," he said in a letter to his brother, Mr. Henry A. Page, of Aberdeen, N. C., "is a quality of government—an artificial unit. When a war comes a government must go in it or stay out of it. It must make a declaration to the world of its attitude. That's all that neutrality is. A government can be neutral, but no *man* can be."

"The President and the Government," Page afterward wrote, "in their insistence upon the moral quality of neutrality, missed the larger meaning of the war. It is at bottom nothing but the effort of the Berlin absolute monarch and his group to impose their will on as large a part of the world as they can overrun. The President started out with the idea that it was a war brought on by many obscure causes—economic and the like; and he thus missed its whole meaning. We have ever since been dealing with the chips which fly from the war machine and have missed the larger meaning of the conflict. Thus we have failed to render help to the side of Liberalism and Democracy, which are at stake in the world."

Evidently Page did not regard his frank descriptions of England under war as expressing unneutral feeling; at any rate, as the war went on, his letters, even those which he wrote to President Wilson, became more and more outspoken. Page's resignation was always at the President's disposal; the time came, as will appear, when it was offered; so long as he occupied his post, however, nothing could turn him from his determination to make what he regarded as an accurate record of events. This policy of maintaining an outward impartiality, and, at the same time, of bringing pressure to bear on Washington in behalf of the Allies, he called "waging neutrality."

Such was the mood in which Page now prepared to play his part in what was probably the greatest diplomatic drama in history. The materials with which this drama concerned itself were such apparently lifeless subjects as ships and cargoes, learned discourses on such abstract matters as the doctrine of continuous voyage, effective blockade, and conditional contraband; yet the struggle, which lasted for three years,

involved the greatest issue of modern times—nothing less than the survival of those conceptions of liberty, government, and society which make the basis of English-speaking civilization. To the newspaper reader of war days, shipping difficulties signified little more than a newspaper headline which he hastily read, or a long and involved lawyer's note which he seldom read at all—or, if he did, practically never understood.

Yet these minute and neglected controversies presented to the American Nation the greatest decision in its history. Once before, a century ago, a European struggle had laid before the United States practically the same problem. Great Britain fought Napoleon, just as it had now been compelled to fight the Hohenzollern, by blockade; such warfare, in the early nineteenth century, led to retaliations, just as did the maritime warfare in the recent conflict, and the United States suffered, in 1812, as in 1914, from what were regarded as the depredations of both sides. In Napoleon's days France and Great Britain, according to the international lawyers, attacked American commerce in illegal ways; on strictly technical grounds this infant nation had an adequate cause of war against both belligerents; but the ultimate consequence of a very confused situation was a declaration of war against Great Britain.

Though an England which was ruled by a George III or a Prince Regent—an England of rotten boroughs, of an ignorant and oppressed peasantry, and of a social organization in which caste was almost as definitely drawn as in an Oriental despotism—could hardly appeal to the enthusiastic democrat as embodying all the ideals of his system, yet the England of 1800 did represent modern progress when compared with the medieval autocracy of Napoleon. If we

take this broad view, therefore, we must admit that, in 1812, we fought on the side of darkness and injustice against the forces that were making for enlightenment. The war of 1914 had not gone far when the thinking American foresaw that it would present to the American people precisely this same problem. What would the decision be? Would America repeat the experience of 1812, or had the teachings of a century so dissipated hatreds that it would be able to exert its influence in a way more worthy of itself and more helpful to the progress of mankind?

There was one great difference, however, between the position of the United States in 1812 and its position in 1914. A century ago we were a small and feeble nation, of undeveloped industries and resources and of immature character; our entrance into the European conflict, on one side or the other, could have little influence upon its results, and, in fact, it influenced it scarcely at all; the side we fought against emerged triumphant. In 1914, we had the greatest industrial organization and the greatest wealth of any nation and the largest white population of any country except Russia; the energy of our people and our national talent for success had long been the marvel of foreign observers. It mattered little in 1812 on which side the United States took its stand; in 1914 such a decision would inevitably determine the issue.

Of all European statesmen there was one man who saw this point with a definiteness which, in itself, gives him a clear title to fame. That was Sir Edward Grey. The time came when a section of the British public was prepared almost to stone the Foreign Secretary in the streets of London, because they believed that his "subservience" to American trade interests was losing the war for Great Britain; his tenure of office

was a constant struggle with British naval and military chiefs who asserted that the Foreign Office, in its efforts to maintain harmonious relations with America, was hamstringing the British fleet, was rendering almost impotent its control of the sea, and was thus throwing away the greatest advantage which Great Britain possessed in its life-and-death struggle.

These criticisms unquestionably caused Sir Edward great unhappiness, but this did not for a moment move him from his course. His vision was fixed upon a much greater purpose. Parliamentary orators might rage because the British fleet was not permitted to make indiscriminate warfare on commerce, but the patient and far-seeing British Foreign Secretary was the man who was really trying to win the war. He was one of the few Englishmen who, in August, 1914, perceived the tremendous extent of the struggle in which Great Britain had engaged. He saw that the English people were facing the greatest crisis since William of Normandy, in 1066, subjected their island to foreign rule. Was England to become the "Reichsland" of a European monarch, and was the British Empire to pass under the sway of Germany?

Proud as Sir Edward Grey was of his country, he was modest in the presence of facts; and one fact of which he early became convinced was that Great Britain could not win unless the United States was ranged upon its side. Here was the country—so Sir Edward reasoned—that contained the largest effective white population in the world; that could train armies larger than those of any other nation; that could make the most munitions, build the largest number of battleships and merchant vessels, and raise food in quantities great enough to feed itself and Europe besides. This power, the Foreign Secretary believed, could de-

termine the issue of the war. If Great Britain secured American sympathy and support, she would win; if Great Britain lost this sympathy and support, she would lose. A foreign policy that would estrange the United States and perhaps even throw its support to Germany would not only lose the war to Great Britain, but it would be perhaps the blackest crime in history, for it would mean the collapse of that British-American coöperation, and the destruction of those British-American ideals and institutions which are the greatest facts in the modern world. This conviction was the basis of Sir Edward's policy from the day that Great Britain declared war. Whatever enemies he might make in England, the Foreign Secretary was determined to shape his course so that the support of the United States would be assured to his country. A single illustration shows the skill and wisdom with which he pursued this great purpose.

Perhaps nothing in the early days of the war enraged the British military chiefs more than the fact that cotton was permitted to go from the United States to Germany. That Germany was using this cotton in the manufacture of torpedoes to sink British ships and of projectiles to kill British soldiers in trenches was well known; nor did many people deny that Great Britain had the right to put cotton on the contraband list. Yet Grey, in the pursuit of his larger end, refused to take this step. He knew that the prosperity of the Southern States depended exclusively upon the cotton crop. He also knew that the South had raised the 1914 crop with no knowledge that war was impending and that to deny the Southern planters their usual access to the German markets would all but ruin them. He believed that such a ruling would immediately alienate the sympathy of a large section of

the United States and make our Southern Senators and Congressmen enemies of Great Britain.

Two other dangers constantly haunted Sir Edward's mind at this time. One was that the enemies of Great Britain would assemble enough votes in Congress to place an embargo upon the shipment of munitions from this country. Such an embargo might well be fatal to Great Britain, for at this time she was importing munitions, especially shells, in enormous quantities from the United States. The other was that such pressure might force the Government to convoy American cargoes with American warships. Great Britain then could stop the cargoes only by attacking our cruisers, and to attack a cruiser is an act of war. Had Congress taken either one of these steps the Allies would have lost the war in the spring of 1915. At a cabinet meeting held to consider this question, Sir Edward Grey set forth this view and strongly advised that cotton should not be made contraband at that time.[1] The Cabinet supported him and events justified the decision. Afterward, in Washington, several of the most influential Senators informed Sir Edward that this action had averted a great crisis.

This was the motive, which, as will appear as the story of our relations with Great Britain progresses, inspired the Foreign Secretary in all his dealings with the United States. His purpose was to use the sea power of Great Britain to keep war materials and foodstuffs out of Germany, but never to go to the length of making an unbridgeable gulf between the United States and Great Britain. The American Ambassador to Great Britain completely sympathized

[1] This was in October, 1914. In August, 1915, when conditions had changed, cotton was declared contrabrand.

with this program. It was Page's business to protect the rights of the United States, just as it was Grey's to protect the rights of Great Britain. Both were vigilant in protecting such rights, and animated differences between the two men on this point were not infrequent. Great Britain did many absurd and high-handed things in intercepting American cargoes, and Page was always active in "protesting" when the basis for the protest actually existed. But on the great overhanging issue the two men were at one.

Like Grey, Page believed that there were more important things involved than an occasional cargo of copper or of oil cake. The American Ambassador thought that the United States should protect its shipping interests, but that it should realize that maritime law was not an exact science, that its principles had been modified by every great conflict in which the blockade had been an effective agency, and that the United States itself, in the Civil War, had not hesitated to make such changes as the changed methods of modern transportation had required. In other words he believed that we could safeguard our rights in a way that would not prevent Great Britain from keeping war materials and foodstuffs out of Germany.

That Page took this larger view of the supreme importance of British and American coöperation is evident from the communications which he now began sending to the President. One that he wrote on October 15, 1914, is especially to the point. The date is extremely important; so early had Page formulated the standards that should guide the United States and so early had he begun his work of attempting to make President Wilson understand the real

nature of the conflict. The position which Page now assumed was one from which he never departed.

To the President

In this great argument about shipping I cannot help being alarmed because we are getting into deep water uselessly. The Foreign Office has yielded unquestioningly to all our requests and has shown the sincerest wish to meet all our suggestions, so long as it is not called upon to admit war materials into Germany. It will not give way to us in that. We would not yield it if we were in their place. Neither would the Germans. England will risk a serious quarrel or even hostilities with us rather than yield. You may look upon this as the final word.

Since the last lists of contraband and conditional contraband were published, such materials as rubber and copper and petroleum have developed entirely new uses in war. The British simply will not let Germany import them. Nothing that can be used for war purposes in Germany now will be used for anything else. Representatives of Spain, Holland, and all the Scandinavian states agree that they can do nothing but acquiesce and file protests and claims, and they admit that Great Britain has the right to revise the list of contraband.

This is not a war in the sense in which we have hitherto used that word. It is a world clash of systems of government, a struggle to the extermination of English civilization or of Prussian military autocracy. Precedents have gone to the scrap heap. We have a new measure for military and diplomatic action. Let us suppose that we press for a few rights

to which the shippers have a theoretical claim. The American people gain nothing and the result is friction with this country; and that is what a very small minority of the agitators in the United States would like. . . .

Let us take a little farther view into the future. If Germany win, will it make any difference what position Great Britain took on the Declaration of London? The Monroe Doctrine will be shot through. We shall have to have a great army and a great navy. But suppose that England win. We shall then have an ugly academic dispute with her because of this controversy. Moreover, we shall not hold a good position for helping to compose the quarrel or for any other service.

The present controversy seems here, where we are close to the struggle . . . a petty matter when it is compared with the grave danger we incur of shutting ourselves off from a position to be of some service to civilization and to the peace of mankind.

. . . As we see the issue here, it is a matter of life and death for English-speaking civilization. It is not a happy time to raise controversies that can be avoided or postponed. We gain nothing, we lose every chance for useful coöperation for peace. In jeopardy also are our friendly relations with Great Britain in the sorest need and the greatest crisis in her history. I know that this is the correct view. I recommend most earnestly that we shall substantially accept the new Order in Council or acquiesce in it and reserve whatever rights we may have. I recommend prompt information be sent to the British Government of such action. I should like to inform Grey that this is our decision.

So far as our neutrality obligations are concerned,

I do not believe that they require us to demand that Great Britain should adopt for our benefit the Declaration of London. Great Britain has never ratified it, nor have any other nations except the United States. In its application to the situation presented by this war it is altogether to the advantage of Germany.

. . . . . .

WALTER H. PAGE.

The immediate cause of this communication was, as its context shows, the fact that the State Department was insisting that Great Britain should adopt the Declaration of London as a code of law for regulating its warfare on German shipping. Hostilities had hardly started when Mr. Bryan made this proposal; his telegram on this subject is dated August 7, 1914. "You will further state," said Mr. Bryan, "that this Government believes that the acceptance of these laws by the belligerents would prevent grave misunderstandings which may arise as to the relations between belligerents and neutrals. It therefore hopes that this inquiry may receive favorable consideration." At the same time Germany and the other belligerents were asked to adopt this Declaration.

In Great Britain the Declaration had an especially interesting course. In that country it became a football of party politics. The Liberal Government was at first inclined to look upon it favorably; the Liberal House of Commons actually ratified it. It soon became apparent, however, that this vote did not represent the opinion of the British public. In fact, few measures have ever aroused such hostility as this Declaration, once its details became known. For more

than a year the hubbub against it filled the daily press, the magazines, the two Houses of Parliament and the hustings; Rudyard Kipling even wrote a poem denouncing it. The adoption of the Declaration, these critics asserted, would destroy the usefulness of the British fleet. In many quarters it was described as a German plot—as merely a part of the preparations which Germany was making for world conquest. The fact is that the Declaration could not successfully stand the analysis to which it was now mercilessly submitted; the House of Lords rejected it, and this action met with more approbation than had for years been accorded the legislative pronouncements of that chamber. The Liberal House of Commons was not in the least dissatisfied with this conclusion, for it realized that it had made a mistake and it was only too happy to be permitted to forget it.

When the war broke out there was therefore no single aspect of maritime law which was quite so odious as the Declaration of London. Great Britain realized that she could never win unless her fleet were permitted to keep contraband out of Germany and, if necessary, completely to blockade that country. What enraged the British public against any suggestion of the Declaration was that it practically deprived Great Britain of this indispensable means of weakening the enemy. In this Declaration were drawn up lists of contraband, non-contraband, and conditional contraband, and all of these, in English eyes, worked to the advantage of Germany and against the advantage of Great Britain. How absurd this classification was is evident from the fact that airplanes were not listed as absolute contraband of war. Germany's difficulty in getting copper was one of the causes of her collapse; yet the Declaration put copper forever on

the non-contraband list; had this new code been adopted, Germany could have imported enormous quantities from this country, instead of being compelled to reinforce her scanty supply by robbing housewives of their kitchen utensils, buildings of their hardware, and church steeples of their bells. Germany's most constant scramble for rubber formed a diverting episode in the struggle; there are indeed few things so indispensable in modern warfare; yet the Declaration included rubber among the innocent articles and thus opened up to Germany the world's supply. But the most serious matter was that the Declaration would have prevented Great Britain from keeping foodstuffs out of the Fatherland.

Germany, of course, promptly accepted the Declaration, for the suggestion fitted in perfectly with her program; but Great Britain was not so acquiescent. Four times was Page instructed to ask the British Government to accede unconditionally, and four times did the Foreign Office refuse. Page was in despair. In the following letter he notified Colonel House that if he were instructed again to move in this matter he would resign his ambassadorship.

To Edward M. House

American Embassy, London,
October 22, 1914.

DEAR HOUSE:

This is about the United States and England. Let's get that settled before we try our hands at making peace in Europe.

One of our greatest assets is the friendship of Great Britain, and our friendship is a still bigger asset for her, and she knows it and values it. Now, if

either country should be damfool enough to throw this away because old Stone[1] roars in the Senate about something that hasn't happened, then this crazy world would be completely mad all round, and there would be no good will left on earth at all.

The case is plain enough to me. England is going to keep war materials out of Germany as far as she can. We'd do it in her place. Germany would do it. Any nation would do it. That's all she has declared her intention of doing. And, if she be let alone, she'll do it in a way to give *us* the very least annoyance possible; for she'll go any length to keep our friendship and good will. And *she has not confiscated a single one of our cargoes even of unconditional contraband.* She has stopped some of them and bought them herself, but confiscated not one. All right; what do we do? We set out on a comprehensive plan to regulate the naval warfare of the world and we up and ask 'em all, "Now, boys, all be good, and agree to the Declaration of London."

"Yah," says Germany, "if England will."

Now Germany isn't engaged in naval warfare to count, and she never even paid the slightest attention to the Declaration all these years. But she saw that it would hinder England and help her now, by forbidding England to stop certain very important war materials from reaching Germany. "Yah," said Germany. But England said that her parliament had rejected the Declaration in times of peace and that she could now hardly be expected to adopt it in the face of this Parliamentary rejection. But to please us, she agreed to adopt it with only two changes.

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[1] Senator William J. Stone, perhaps the leading spokesman of the pro-German cause in the United States Senate. Senator Stone represented Missouri.

Then Lansing to the bat:

"No, no," says Lansing, "you've got to adopt it all."

Four times he's made me ask for its adoption, the last time coupled with a proposition that if England would adopt it, she might issue a subsequent proclamation saying that, since the Declaration is contradictory, she will construe it in her own way, and the United States will raise no objection!

. . . . . .

In a word, England has acted in a friendly way to us and will so act, if we allow her. But Lansing, instead of trusting to her good faith and reserving all our rights under international law and usage, imagines that he can force her to agree to a code that the Germans now agree to because, in Germany's present predicament, it will be especially advantageous to Germany. Instead of trusting her, he assumes that she means to do wrong and proceeds to try to bind her in advance. He hauls her up and tries her in court—that's his tone.

Now the relations that I have established with Sir Edward Grey have been built up on frankness, fairness and friendship. I can't have relations of any other sort nor can England and the United States have relations of any other sort. This is the place we've got to now. Lansing seems to assume that the way to an amicable agreement is through an angry controversy.

Lansing's method is the trouble. He treats Great Britain, to start with, as if she were a criminal and an opponent. That's the best way I know to cause trouble to American shipping and to bring back the good old days of mutual hatred and distrust for a

generation or two. If that isn't playing into the hands of the Germans, what would be? And where's the "neutrality" of this kind of action?

See here: If we let England go on, we can throw the whole responsibility on her and reserve all our rights under international law and usage and claim damages (and get 'em) for every act of injury, if acts of injury occur; and we can keep her friendship and good will. Every other neutral nation is doing that. Or we can insist on regulating all naval warfare and have a quarrel and refer it to a Treaty Commission and claim at most the selfsame damages with a less chance to get 'em. We can get damages without a quarrel; or we can have a quarrel and probably get damages. Now, why, in God's name, should we provoke a quarrel?

. . . . . .

Now about the peace of Europe. Nothing can yet be done, perhaps nothing now can ever be done by us. The Foreign Office doubts our wisdom and prudence since Lansing came into action. The whole atmosphere is changing. One more such move and they will conclude that Dernburg and Bernstorff have seduced us—without our knowing it, to be sure; but their confidence in our judgment will be gone. God knows I have tried to keep this confidence intact and our good friendship secure. But I have begun to get despondent over the outlook since the President telegraphed me that Lansing's proposal would settle the matter. I still believe he did not understand it—he couldn't have done so. Else he could not have approved it. But that tied my hands. If Lansing again brings up the Declaration of London—after four flat and reasonable rejections—I shall resign.

I will not be the instrument of a perfectly gratuitous and ineffective insult to this patient and fair and friendly government and people who in my time have done us so many kindnesses and never an injury but Carden, and who sincerely try now to meet our wishes. It would be too asinine an act ever to merit forgiveness or ever to be forgotten. I should blame myself the rest of my life. It would grieve Sir Edward more than anything except this war. It would knock the management of foreign affairs by this administration into the region of sheer idiocy. I'm afraid any peace talk from us, as it is, would merely be whistling down the wind. If we break with England—not on any case or act of violence to our shipping—but on a useless discussion, in advance, of general principles of conduct during the war—just for a discussion—we've needlessly thrown away our great chance to be of some service to this world gone mad. If Lansing isn't stopped, that's what he will do. Why doesn't the President see Spring Rice? Why don't you take him to see him?

Good night, my good friend. I still have hope that the President himself will take this in hand.

Yours always,
W. H. P.

The letters and the cablegrams which Page was sending to Colonel House and the State Department at this time evidently ended the matter. By the middle of October the two nations were fairly deadlocked. Sir Edward Grey's reply to the American proposal had been an acceptance of the Declaration of London with certain modifications. For the list of contraband in the Declaration he had submitted the list already adopted by Great Britain in its Order in

Council, and he had also rejected that article which made it impossible for Great Britain to apply the doctrine of "continuous voyage" to conditional contraband. The modified acceptance, declared Mr. Lansing, was a practical rejection—as of course it was, and as it was intended to be. So the situation remained for several exciting weeks, the State Department insisting on the Declaration in full, precisely as the legal luminaries had published it five years before, the Foreign Office courteously but inflexibly refusing to accede. Only the cordial personal relations which prevailed between Grey and Page prevented the crisis from producing the most disastrous results. Finally, on October 17th, Page proposed by cable an arrangement which he hoped would settle the matter. This was that the King should issue a proclamation accepting the Declaration with practically the modifications suggested above, and that a new Order in Council should be issued containing a new list of contraband. Sir Edward Grey was not to ask the American Government to accept this proclamation; all that he asked was that Washington should offer no objections to it. It was proposed that the United States at the same time should publish a note withdrawing its suggestion for the adoption of the Declaration, and explaining that it proposed to rest the rights of its citizens upon the existing rules of international law and the treaties of the United States. This solution was accepted.

"Now we can go on, . . . in an independent position vigorously stand up for every right and privilege under law and usage and treaties; and we have here a government that we can deal with frankly and not (I hope) in a mood to suspect us of wishing to put it at a disadvantage for the sake of a general code or doctrine. A

land and naval and air and submarine battle (the greatest battle in the history of the belligerent race of man) within seventy-five miles of the coast of England, which hasn't been invaded since 1066 and is now in its greatest danger since that time; and this is no time I fear, to force a great body of doctrine on Great Britain. God knows I'm afraid some American boat will run on a mine somewhere in the Channel or the North Sea. There's war there as there is on land in Germany. Nobody tries to get goods through on land on the continent, and they make no complaints that commerce is stopped. Everybody tries to ply the Channel and the North Sea as usual, both of which have German and English mines and torpedo craft and submarines almost as thick as batteries along the hostile camps on land. The British Government (which now issues marine insurance) will not insure a British boat to carry food to Holland en route to the starving Belgians; and I hear that no government and no insurance company will write insurance for anything going across the North Sea. I wonder if the extent and ferocity and danger of this war are fully realized in the United States?"

And so this crisis was passed; it was the first great service that Page had rendered the cause of the Allies and his own country. Yet shipping difficulties had their more agreeable aspects. Had it not been for the fact that both Page and Grey had an understanding sense of humor, neutrality would have proved a more difficult path than it actually was. Even amid the tragic problems with which these two men were dealing there was not lacking an occasional moment's relaxation into the lighter aspect of things.

One of the curious memorials preserved in the

British Foreign Office is the canceled $15,000,000 check with which Great Britain paid the *Alabama* claims. That the British should frame this memento of their great diplomatic feat and hang it in the Foreign Office is an evidence of the fact that in statesmanship, as in less exalted matters, the English are excellent sportsmen. The real justification of the honor paid to this piece of paper, of course, is that the settlement of the *Alabama* claims by arbitration signalized a great forward step in international relations and did much to heal a century's troubles between the United States and Great Britain. Sir Edward Grey used frequently to call Page's attention to this document. It represented the amount of money, then considered large, which Great Britain had paid the United States for the depredations on American shipping for which she was responsible during the Civil War.

One day the two men were discussing certain detentions of American cargoes—high-handed acts which, in Page's opinion, were unwarranted. Not infrequently, in the heat of discussion, Page would get up and pace the floor. And on this occasion his body, as well as his mind, was in a state of activity. Suddenly his eye was attracted by the framed *Alabama* check. He leaned over, peered at it intensely, and then quickly turned to the Foreign Secretary:

"If you don't stop these seizures, Sir Edward, some day you'll have your entire room papered with things like that!"

Not long afterward Sir Edward in his turn scored on Page. The Ambassador called to present one of the many State Department notes. The occasion was an embarrassing one, for the communication was written in the Department's worst literary style. It not

infrequently happened that these notes, in the form in which Page received them, could not be presented to the British Government; they were so rasping and undiplomatic that Page feared that he would suffer the humiliation of having them returned, for there are certain things which no self-respecting Foreign Office will accept. On such occasions it was the practice of the London Embassy to smooth down the language before handing the paper to the Foreign Secretary. The present note was one of this kind; but Page, because of his friendly relations with Grey, decided to transmit the communication in its original shape.

Sir Edward glanced over the document, looked up, and remarked, with a twinkle in his eye:

"This reads as though they think that they are still talking to George the Third."

The roar of laughter that followed was something quite unprecedented amid the thick and dignified walls of the Foreign Office.

It has been said that the tact and good sense of Page and Grey, working sympathetically for the same end, avoided many an impending crisis. The trouble caused early in 1915 by the ship *Dacia* and the way in which the difficulty was solved, perhaps illustrate the value of this coöperation at its best. In the early days of the War Congress passed a bill admitting foreign ships to American registry. The wisdom and even the "neutrality" of such an act were questioned at the time. Colonel House, in one of his early telegrams to the President, declared that this bill "is full of lurking dangers." Colonel House was right. The trouble was that many German merchant ships were interned in American harbors, fearing to put to sea, where the watchful British warships lay waiting for them. Any attempt to place these vessels under the

American flag, and to use them for trade between American and German ports, would at once cause a crisis with the Allies, for such a paper change in ownership would be altogether too transparent. Great Britain viewed this legislation with disfavor, but did not think it politic to protest such transfers generally; Spring Rice contented himself with informing the State Department that his government would not object so long as this changed status did not benefit Germany. If such German ships, after being transferred to the American flag, engaged in commerce between American ports and South American ports, or other places remotely removed from the Fatherland, Great Britain would make no difficulty.

The *Dacia,* a merchantman of the Hamburg-America line, had been lying at her wharf in Port Arthur, Texas, since the outbreak of the war. In early January, 1915, she was purchased by Mr. E. N. Breitung, of Marquette, Michigan. Mr. Breitung caused great excitement in the newspapers when he announced that he had placed the *Dacia* under American registry, according to the terms of this new law, had put upon her an American crew, and that he proposed to load her with cotton and sail for Germany.

The crisis had now arisen which the well-wishers of Great Britain and the United States had so dreaded. Great Britain's position was a difficult one. If it acquiesced, the way would be opened for placing under American registry all the German and Austrian ships that were then lying unoccupied in American ports and using them in trade between the United States and the Central Powers. If Great Britain seized the *Dacia,* then there was the likelihood that this would embroil her with the American Government—and this would serve German purposes quite as well.

Sir Cecil Spring Rice, the British Ambassador at Washington, at once notified Washington that the *Dacia* would be seized if she sailed for a German port. The cotton which she intended to carry was at that time not contraband, but the vessel itself was German and was thus subject to apprehension as enemy property. The seriousness of this position was that technically the *Dacia* was now an American ship, for an American citizen owned her, she carried an American crew, she bore on her flagstaff the American flag, and she had been admitted to American registry under a law recently passed by Congress. How could the United States sit by quietly and permit this seizure to take place? When the *Dacia* sailed on January 23rd the excitement was keen; the voyage had obtained a vast amount of newspaper advertising, and the eyes of the world were fixed upon her. German sympathizers attributed the attitude of the American Government in permitting the vessel to sail as a "dare" to Great Britain, and the fact that Great Britain had announced her intention of taking up this "dare" made the situation still more tense.

When matters had reached this pass Page one day dropped into the Foreign Office.

"Have you ever heard of the British fleet, Sir Edward?" he asked.

Grey admitted that he had, though the question obviously puzzled him.

"Yes," Page went on, musingly. "We've all heard of the British fleet. Perhaps we have heard too much about it. Don't you think it's had too much advertising?"

The Foreign Secretary looked at Page with an expression that implied a lack of confidence in his sanity.

"But have you ever heard of the French fleet?" the

American went on. "France has a fleet too, I believe."

Sir Edward granted that.

"Don't you think that the French fleet ought to have a little advertising?"

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"Well," said Page, "there's the *Dacia.* Why not let the French fleet seize it and get some advertising?"

A gleam of understanding immediately shot across Grey's face. The old familiar twinkle came into his eye.

"Yes," he said, "why not let the Belgian royal yacht seize it?"

This suggestion from Page was one of the great inspirations of the war. It amounted to little less than genius. By this time Washington was pretty wearied of the *Dacia,* for mature consideration had convinced the Department that Great Britain had the right on its side. Washington would have been only too glad to find a way out of the difficult position into which it had been forced, and this Page well understood. But this government always finds itself in an awkward plight in any controversy with Great Britain, because the hyphenates raise such a noise that it has difficulty in deciding such disputes upon their merits. To ignore the capture of this ship by the British would have brought all this hullabaloo again about the ears of the Administration.

But the position of France is entirely different; the memories of Lafayette and Rochambeau still exercise a profound spell on the American mind; France does not suffer from the persecution of hyphenate populations, and Americans will stand even outrages from France without getting excited. Page knew that if the British seized the *Dacia,* the cry would go up in

certain quarters for immediate war, but that, if France committed the same crime, the guns of the adversary would be spiked. It was purely a case of sentiment and "psychology." And so the event proved. His suggestion was at once acted on; a French cruiser went out into the Channel, seized the offending ship, took it into a port, where a French prize court promptly condemned it. The proceeding did not cause even a ripple of hostility. The *Dacia* was sold to Frenchmen, rechristened the *Yser* and put to work in the Mediterranean trade. The episode was closed in the latter part of 1915 when a German submarine torpedoed the vessel and sent it to the bottom.

Such was the spirit which Page and Sir Edward Grey brought to the solution of the shipping problems of 1914–1917. There is much more to tell of this great task of "waging neutrality," and it will be told in its proper place. But already it is apparent to what extent these two men served the cause of English-speaking civilization. Neither would quibble or uphold an argument which he thought unjust, even though his nation might gain in a material sense, and neither would pitch the discussion in any other key than forbearance and mutual accommodation and courtliness. For both men had the same end in view. They were both thinking, not of the present, but of the coming centuries. The coöperation of the two nations in meeting the dangers of autocracy and Prussian barbarism, in laying the foundations of a future in which peace, democracy, and international justice should be the directing ideas of human society—such was the ultimate purpose at which these two statesmen aimed.

And no men have ever been more splendidly justified by events. The Anglo-American situation of

1914 contained dangers before which all believers in real progress now shudder. Had Anglo-American diplomacy been managed with less skill and consideration, the United States and Great Britain would have become involved in a quarrel beside which all their previous differences would have appeared insignificant. Mutual hatreds and hostilities would have risen that would have prevented the entrance of the United States into the war on the side of the Allies. It is not inconceivable that the history of 1812 would have been repeated, and that the men and resources of this country might have been used to support purposes which have always been hateful to the American conscience.

That the world was saved from this calamity is owing largely to the fact that Great Britain had in its Foreign Office a man who was always solving temporary irritations with his eyes constantly fixed upon a great goal, and that the United States had as ambassador in London a man who had the most exalted view of the mission of his country, who had dedicated his life to the world-wide spread of the American ideal, and who believed that an indispensable part of this work was the maintenance of a sympathetic and helpful coöperation with the English-speaking peoples.

CHAPTER IX

GERMANY'S FIRST PEACE DRIVES

THE Declaration of London was not the only problem that distracted Page in these early months of the war. Washington's apparent determination to make peace also added to his daily anxieties. That any attempt to end hostilities should have distressed so peace-loving and humanitarian a statesman as Page may seem surprising; it was, however, for the very reason that he was a man of peace that these Washington endeavors caused him endless worry. The inspiring force back of the proposals, as the Ambassador well understood, was a panic-stricken Germany. The real purpose was not a peace, but a truce; and the cause which was to be advanced was not democracy but Prussian absolutism. Between the Battle of the Marne and the sinking of the *Lusitania* four attempts were made to end the war; all four were set afoot by Germany. President Wilson was the man to whom the Germans appealed to rescue them from their dilemma.

It is no longer a secret that the Germans at this time regarded their situation as a tragic one; the success that they had anticipated for forty years had proved to be a disaster. The attempt to repeat the great episodes of 1864, 1866, and 1870, when Prussia had overwhelmed Denmark, Austria, and France in three brief campaigns, had ignominiously failed. Instead of beholding a conquered Europe at her feet,

Germany awoke from her illusion to find herself encompassed by a ring of resolute and powerful foes. The fact that the British Empire, with its immense resources, naval, military, and economic, was now leading the alliance against them, convinced the most intelligent Germans that the Fatherland was face to face with the greatest crisis in its history.

Peace now became the underground Germanic program. Yet the Germans did not have that inexorable respect for facts which would have persuaded them to accept terms to which the Allies could consent. The military oligarchy were thinking not so much of saving the Fatherland as of saving themselves; a settlement which would have been satisfactory to their enemies would have demanded concessions which the German people, trained for forty years to expect an unparalleled victory, would have regarded as a defeat. The collapse of the militarists and of Hohenzollernism would have ensued. What the German oligarchy desired was a peace which they could picture to their deluded people as a triumph, one that would enable them to extricate themselves at the smallest possible cost from what seemed a desperate position, to escape the penalties of their crimes, to emerge from their failure with a Germany still powerful, both in economic resources and in arms, and to set to work again industriously preparing for a renewal of the struggle at a more favorable time. If negotiations resulted in such a truce, the German purpose would be splendidly served; even if they failed, however, the gain for Germany would still be great. Germany could appear as the belligerent which desired peace and the Entente could perhaps be maneuvered into the position of the side responsible for continuing the war.

The consideration which was chiefly at stake in

these tortuous proceedings was public opinion in the United States. Americans do not yet understand the extent to which their country was regarded as the determining power. Both the German and the British Foreign Offices clearly understood, in August, 1914, that the United States, by throwing its support, especially its economic support, to one side or the other, could settle the result. Probably Germany grasped this point even more clearly than did Great Britain, for, from the beginning, she constantly nourished the hope that she could embroil the United States and Great Britain—a calamity which would have given victory to the German arms.

In every German move there were thus several motives, and one of the chief purposes of the subterranean campaigns which she now started for peace was the desire of putting Britain in the false light of prolonging the war for aggressive purposes, and thus turning to herself that public opinion in this country which was so outspoken on the side of the Allies. Such public opinion, if it could be brought to regard Germany in a tolerant spirit, could easily be fanned into a flame by the disputes over blockades and shipping, and the power of the United States might thus be used for the advancement of the Fatherland. On the other hand, if Germany could obtain a peace which would show a profit for her tremendous effort, then the negotiations would have accomplished their purpose.

The Ambassador was especially apprehensive of these peace moves in the early days of September, when the victorious German armies were marching on Paris. In London, as in most parts of the world, the capture of the French capital was then regarded as inevitable. September 3, 1914, was one of the dark-

est days in modern times. The population of Paris was fleeing southward; the Government had moved its headquarters to Bordeaux; and the moment seemed to be at hand when the German Emperor would make his long anticipated entry into the capital of France. It was under these circumstances that the American Ambassador to Great Britain sent the following message directly to the President:

To the President

American Embassy, London,
Sep. 3, 4 A. M.

Everybody in this city confidently believes that the Germans, if they capture Paris will make a proposal for peace, and that the German Emperor will send you a message declaring that he is unwilling to shed another drop of blood. Any proposal that the Kaiser makes will be simply the proposal of a conqueror. His real purpose will be to preserve the Hohenzollern dynasty and the imperial bureaucracy. The prevailing English judgment is that, if Germany be permitted to stop hostilities, the war will have accomplished nothing. There is a determination here to destroy utterly the German bureaucracy, and Englishmen are prepared to sacrifice themselves to any extent in men and money. The preparations that are being made here are for a long war; as I read the disposition and the character of Englishmen they will not stop until they have accomplished their purpose. There is a general expression of hope in this country that neither the American Government nor the public opinion of our country will look upon any suggestion for peace as a serious one which does not aim, first of

all, at the absolute destruction of the German bureaucracy.

. . . . . .

PAGE.

This message had hardly reached Washington when the peace effort of which it warned the President began to take practical form. In properly estimating these maneuvers it must be borne in mind that German diplomacy always worked underground and that it approached its negotiations in a way that would make the other side appear as taking the initiative. This was a phase of German diplomatic technique with which every European Foreign Office had long been familiar. Count Bernstorff arrived in the United States from Germany in the latter part of August, evidently with instructions from his government to secure the intercession of the United States.

There were two unofficial men in New York who were ideally qualified to serve the part of intermediaries: Mr. James Speyer and Mr. Oscar S. Straus. Mr. Straus had been born in Germany; his father had been a German revolutionist of 'Forty-eight; like Carl Schurz, Abraham Jacobi, and Franz Sigel, he had come to America to escape Prussian militarism and the Prussian autocracy, and his children had been educated in a detestation of the things for which the German Empire stood. Three times Mr. Straus had served the United States as Ambassador to Turkey; he had filled the post of Secretary of Commerce and Labor in President Roosevelt's Cabinet and had held other important public commissions. Among his other activities, Mr. Straus had played an important part in the

peace movement of the preceding quarter of a century and he had been a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague.

On September 4th, Mr. Straus arrived at New York on the *Mauretania*. He had hardly reached this country when he was called upon the telephone by Mr. James Speyer, a friend of many years' standing. Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, Mr. Speyer said, was a guest at his country home, Waldheim, at Scarboro, on the Hudson; Mr. Speyer was giving a small, informal dinner the next evening, Saturday, September 5th, and he asked Mr. and Mrs. Straus to come. Mr. Straus accepted the invitation, mentally resolving that he would not discuss the war himself, but merely listen. It would certainly have been a difficult task for any man to avoid this subject on this particular evening; the date was September 5th, the day when the German Army suddenly stopped in its progress toward Paris, and began retreating, the French and the British forces in pursuit. A few minutes before Count Bernstorff sat down at Mr. Speyer's table, with Mr. Straus opposite, he had learned that the magnificent enterprise which Germany had planned for forty years had failed and that his country was facing a monstrous disaster. The Battle of the Marne was raging in all its fury while this pacific conversation at Mr. Speyer's house was taking place.

Of course the war became the immediate topic of discussion. Count Bernstorff at once plunged into the usual German point of view—that Germany did not want war in the first place, that the Entente had forced the issue, and the like.

"The Emperor and the German Government stood for peace," he said.

Naturally, a man who had spent a considerable

part of his life promoting the peace cause pricked up his ears at this statement.

"Does that sentiment still prevail in Germany?" asked Mr. Straus.

"Yes," replied the German Ambassador.

"Would your government entertain a proposal for mediation now?" asked Mr. Straus.

"Certainly," Bernstorff promptly replied. He hastened to add, however, that he was speaking unofficially.

"Do you object to my laying this matter before our government?"

"No, I do not."

Mr. Straus glanced at his watch; it was 10:15 o'clock.

"I think I shall go to Washington at once—this very night. I can get the midnight train."

In a few minutes, Mr. Straus was speeding in his automobile through Westchester County in the direction of the Pennsylvania Station. He caught the express, and, the next morning, which was Sunday the sixth, he was laying the whole matter before Secretary Bryan at the latter's house. Naturally, Mr. Bryan was overjoyed at the news; he at once summoned Bernstorff from New York to Washington, and went over the suggestion personally. The German Ambassador repeated the statements which he had made to Mr. Straus—always guardedly qualifying his remarks by saying that the proposal had not come originally from him but from his American friend. Meanwhile Mr. Bryan asked Mr. Straus to discuss the matter with the British and French ambassadors.

Both thought that the proposal should be seriously considered.

"If it holds out one chance in a hundred of lessen-

ing the length of the war, we should entertain it," said Ambassador Jusserand.

These facts were at once cabled to Page, who took the matter up with Sir Edward Grey. A despatch from the latter to the British Ambassador in Washington gives a splendid summary of the British attitude on such approaches at this time.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir Cecil Spring Rice

Foreign Office,
September 9, 1914.

SIR:

The American Ambassador showed me to-day a communication that he had from Mr. Bryan. It was to the effect that Mr. Straus and Mr. Speyer had been talking with the German Ambassador, who had said that, though he was without instructions, he thought that Germany might be disposed to end the war by mediation. . . .

The American Ambassador said to me that this information gave him a little concern. He feared that, coming after the declaration that we had signed last week with France and Russia about carrying on the war in common,[1] the peace parties in the United States might be given the impression that Germany was in favor of peace, and that the responsibility for continuing war was on others.

I said that the agreement that we had made with France and Russia was an obvious one; when three countries were at war on the same side, one of them could not honorably make special terms for itself and

[1] On September 5, 1914, Great Britain, France, and Russia signed the Pact of London, an agreement which bound the three Powers of the Entente to make war and peace as a unit. Each Power specifically pledged itself not to make a separate peace.

leave the others in the lurch. As to mediation, I was favorable to it in principle, but the real question was: On what terms could the war be ended? If the United States could devise anything that would bring this war to an end and prevent another such war being forced on Europe I should welcome the proposal.

The Ambassador said that before the war began I had made suggestions for avoiding it, and that these suggestions had been refused.

I said that this was so, but since the war began there were two further considerations to be borne in mind: We were fighting to save the west of Europe from being dominated by Prussian militarism; Germany had prepared to the day for this war, and we could not again have a great military power in the middle of Europe preparing war in this way and forcing it upon us; and the second thing was that cruel wrong had been done to Belgium, for which there should be some compensation. I had no indication whatever that Germany was prepared to make any reparation to Belgium, and, while repeating that in principle I was favorable to mediation, I could see nothing to do but to wait for the reply of the German Emperor to the question that Mr. Bryan had put to him and for the United States to ascertain on what terms Germany would make peace if the Emperor's reply was favorable to mediation.

The Ambassador made it quite clear that he regarded what the German Ambassador had said as a move in the game. He agreed with what I had said respecting terms of peace, and that there seemed no prospect at present of Germany being prepared to accept them.

I am, &c.,
E. GREY.

A letter from Page to Colonel House gives Page's interpretation of this negotiation:

To Edward M. House

London, September 10, 1914.

My dear House:

A rather serious situation has arisen: The Germans of course thought that they would take Paris. They were then going to propose a conqueror's terms of peace, which they knew would not be accepted. But they would use their so-called offer of peace purely for publicity purposes. They would say, "See, men of the world, we want peace; we offer peace; the continuance of this awful war is not our doing."

Every nation was willing to accept Sir Edward Grey's proposals [1] but Germany. She was bent on a war of conquest. Now she's likely to get licked—lock, stock, and barrel. She is carrying on a propaganda and a publicity campaign all over the world. The Allies can't and won't accept any peace except on the condition that German militarism be uprooted. They are not going to live again under that awful shadow and fear. They say truly that life on such terms is not worth living. Moreover, if Germany should win the military control of Europe, she would soon—that same war party—attack the United States. The war will not end until this condition can be imposed—that there shall be no more militarism.

But in the meantime, such men as Straus (a good fellow) may be able to let (by helping) the Germans appear to the Peace people as really desiring peace. Of course, what they want is to save their mutton.

[1] This refers, of course, to proposals made before the war started.

And if we begin mediation talk now on that basis, we shall not be wanted when a real chance for mediation comes; our chance for real usefulness will be thrown away.

Put the President on his guard.

W. H. P.

In the latter part of the month came Germany's reply. One would never suspect, when reading it, that Germany had played any part in instigating the negotiation. The Kaiser repeated the old charges that the Entente had forced the war on the Fatherland, that it was now determined to annihilate the Central Powers and that consequently there was no hope that the warring countries could agree upon acceptable terms for ending the struggle.

So ended Germany's first peace drive, and in the only possible way that it could end. But the Washington administration continued to be most friendly to mediation. A letter of Colonel House's, dated October 4, 1914, possesses great historical importance. It was written after a detailed discussion with President Wilson, and it indicates not only the President's desire to bring the struggle to a close, but it describes in some detail the principles which the President then regarded as essential to a permanent peace. It furnishes the central idea of the presidential policy for the next four years; indeed, it contains the first statement of that famous "Article X" of the Covenant of the League of Nations which was Mr. Wilson's most important contribution to that contentious document. This was the article which pledges the League "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence" of all its members; it was the article which,

more than any other, made the League obnoxious to Americans, who interpreted it as an attempt to involve them perpetually in the quarrels of Europe; and it was the one section of the Treaty of Versailles which was most responsible for the rejection of that document by the United States Senate. There are other suggestions in Colonel House's letter which apparently bore fruit in the League Covenant. It is somewhat astonishing that a letter of Colonel House's, written as far back as October 3, 1914, two months after the outbreak of the war, should contain "Article X" as one of the essential terms of peace, as well as other ideas afterward incorporated in that document, accompanied by an injunction that Page should present the suggestion to Sir Edward Grey:

From Edward M. House

October 3rd, 1914.

DEAR PAGE:

Frank [the Ambassador's son] has just come in and has given me your letter of September 22nd which is of absorbing interest. You have never done anything better than this letter, and some day, when you give the word, it must be published. But in the meantime, it will repose in the safe-deposit box along with your others and with those of our great President.

I have just returned from Washington where I was with the President for nearly four days. He is looking well and is well. Sometimes his spirits droop, but then again, he is his normal self.

Before I came from Prides[1] I was fearful lest

[1] Colonel House's summer home in Massachusetts.

Straus, Bernstorff, and others would drive the President into doing something unwise. I have always counseled him to remain quiet for the moment and let matters unfold themselves further. In the meantime, I have been conferring with Bernstorff, with Dumba,[1] and of course, Spring Rice. The President now wants me to keep in touch with the situation, and I do not think there is any danger of anyone on the outside injecting himself into it unless Mr. Bryan does something on his own initiative.

Both Bernstorff and Dumba say that their countries are ready for peace talks, but the difficulty is with England. Sir Cecil says their statements are made merely to place England in a false position.

The attitude, I think, for England to maintain is the one which she so ably put forth to the world. That is, peace must come only upon condition of disarmament and must be permanent. I have a feeling that Germany will soon be willing to discuss terms. I do not agree that Germany has to be completely crushed and that terms must be made either in Berlin or London. It is manifestly against England's interest and the interest of Europe generally for Russia to become the dominating military force in Europe, just as Germany was. The dislike which England has for Germany should not blind her to actual conditions. If Germany is crushed, England cannot solely write the terms of peace, but Russia's wishes must also largely prevail.

When peace conversations begin, at best, they will probably continue many months before anything tangible comes from them. England and the Allies could

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[2] Ambassador from Austria-Hungary to the United States.

readily stand on the general proposition that only enduring peace will satisfy them, and I can see no insuperable obstacle in the way.

The Kaiser did not want war and was not responsible for it further than his lack of foresight which led him to build up a formidable engine of war which later dominated him. Peace cannot be made until the war party in Germany find that their ambitions cannot be realized, and this, I think, they are beginning to know.

When the war is ended and the necessary territorial alignments made, it seems to me, the best guaranty of peace could be brought by every nation in Europe guaranteeing the territorial integrity of every other nation,[1] by confining the manufacture of arms to the governments themselves, and by permitting representatives of all nations to inspect, at any time, the works.[2]

Then, too, all sources of national irritation should be removed so what at first may be a sore spot cannot grow into a malignant disease. It will not be too difficult, I think, to bring about an agreement that will insure permanent peace, provided all the nations of Europe are honest in their desire for it.

I am writing this to you with the President's knowledge and consent and with the thought that it will be conveyed to Sir Edward. There is a growing impatience in this country because of this war and there is constant pressure upon the President to use his influence to bring about normal conditions. He does not wish to do anything to irritate or offend any one of

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[1] This, with certain modifications is Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

[2] There is a suggestion of these provisions in Article 8 of the League Covenant.

the belligerent nations, but he has an abiding faith in the efficacy of open and frank discussion between those that are now at war.

As far as I can see, no harm can be done by a dispassionate discussion at this stage, even though nothing comes of it. In a way, it is perhaps better that informal and unofficial conversations are begun and later the principals can take it up themselves.

I am sure that Sir Edward is too great a man to let any prejudices deter him from ending, as soon as possible, the infinite suffering that each day of war entails.

Faithfully yours,
E. M. House.

By December 4th Washington had evidently made up its mind to move again.

From Edward M. House

December 4th, 1914.

Dear Page:

The President desires to start peace parleys at the very earliest moment, but he does not wish to offend the sensibilities of either side by making a proposal before the time is opportune. He is counting upon being given a hint, possibly through me, in an unofficial way, as to when a proffer from him will be acceptable.

Pressure is being brought upon him to offer his services again, for this country is suffering, like the rest of the neutral world, from the effects of the war, and our people are becoming restless.

Would you mind conveying this thought delicately to Sir Edward Grey and letting me know what he thinks?

I stand ready to go to Germany at any moment in order to sound the temper of that government, and I would then go to England as I did last June.

This nation would not look with favor upon a policy that held nothing but the complete annihilation of the enemy.

Something must be done sometime, by somebody, to initiate a peace movement, and I can think of no way, at the moment, but the one suggested.

I will greatly appreciate your writing me fully and freely in regard to this phase of the situation.

Faithfully yours,
E. M. House.

To this Page immediately replied:

To Edward M. House

December 12th, 1914.

My dear House:

The English rulers have no feeling of vengeance. I have never seen the slightest traces of that. But they are determined to secure future safety. They will not have this experience repeated if they can help it. They realize now that they have been living under a sort of fear—or dread—for ten years: they sometimes felt that it was bound to come some time and then at other times they could hardly believe it. And they will spend all the men and all the money they have rather than suffer that fear again or have that danger. Now, if anybody could fix a basis for the complete restoration of Belgium, so far as restoration is possible, and for the elimination of militarism, I am sure the *English* would talk on that basis. But

there are two difficulties—Russia wouldn't talk till she has Constantinople, and I haven't found anybody who can say exactly what you mean by the "elimination of militarism." Disarmament? England will have her navy to protect her incoming bread and meat. How, then, can she say to Germany, "You can't have an army"?

You say the Americans are becoming "restless." The plain fact is that the English people, and especially the English military and naval people, don't care a fig what the Americans think and feel. They say, "We're fighting their battle, too—the battle of democracy and freedom from bureaucracy—why don't they come and help us in our life-and-death struggle?" I have a drawer full of letters saying this, not one of which I have ever answered. The official people never say that, of course—nor the really responsible people, but a vast multitude of the public do. . . .

Now, the question which nobody seems to be able to answer is this: How can the military party and the military spirit of Germany be prevented from continuing to prepare for the conquest of Great Britain and from going to work to try it again? That implies a change in the form, spirit, and control of the German Empire. If they keep up a great army, they will keep it up with that end more or less in view. If the military party keeps in power, they will try it again in twenty-five or forty years. This is all that the English care about or think about.

They don't see how it is to be done themselves. All they see yet is that they must show the Germans that they can't whip Great Britain. If England wins decisively the English hope that somehow the military

party will be overthrown in Germany and that the Germans, under peaceful leadership, will go about their business—industrial, political, educational, etc.—and quit dreaming of and planning for universal empire and quit maintaining a great war machine, which at some time, for some reason, must attack somebody to justify its existence. This makes it difficult for the English to make overtures to or to receive overtures from this military war-party which now *is* Germany. But, if it be possible so completely to whip the war party that it will somehow be thrown out of power at home—that's the only way they now see out of it. To patch up a peace, leaving the German war party in power, they think, would be only to invite another war.

There you are. I've blinked myself blind and talked myself hoarse to men in authority—from Grey down—to see a way out—without keeping this intolerable slaughter up to the end. But they stand just where I tell you.

. . . . . .

At present, I can't for the life of me see a way to peace, for the one reason I have told you. The Germans wish to whip England, to invade England. They started with their army toward England. Till that happened England didn't have an army. But I see no human power that can give the English now what they are determined to have—safety for the future—till some radical change is made in the German system so that they will no longer have a war party any more than England has a war party. England surely has no wish to make conquest of Germany. If Germany will show that she has no wish to make

conquest of England, the war would end to-morrow. . . . All this for you and me only—nobody else.

Heartily yours,
WALTER H. PAGE.

Probably Page thought that this statement of the case—and it was certainly a masterly statement—would end any attempt to get what he regarded as an unsatisfactory and dangerous peace. But President Wilson could not be deterred from pressing the issue. His conviction was firm that this winter of 1914–1915 represented the most opportune time to bring the warring nations to terms, and it was a conviction from which he never departed. After the sinking of the *Lusitania* the Administration gazed back regretfully at its frustrated attempts of the preceding winter, and it was inclined to place the responsibility for this failure upon Great Britain and France. The efforts which the Administration was making represented a most serious determination to bring hostilities to an end. This letter and the correspondence which now took place with Page also indicate the general terms upon which the Wilson Administration believed that which Colonel House now set forth were probably the mighty differences could be composed. The ideas more the President's than his own; he was merely the intermediary in their transmission. They emphasized Mr. Wilson's conviction that a decisive victory on either side would be a misfortune for mankind. As early as August, 1914, this was clearly the conviction that underlay all others in the President's interpretation of events. His other basic idea was that militarism should come to an end "on land and sea"; this could mean nothing except that Germany was expected

to abandon its army and that Great Britain was to abandon its navy.

From Edward M. House

January 4th, 1915.

DEAR PAGE:

I believe the Dual Alliance is thoroughly ready for peace and I believe they would be willing to agree upon terms that England would accept provided Russia and France could be satisfied.

They would, in my opinion, evacuate both Belgium and France and indemnify the former, and they would, I think, be willing to begin negotiations upon a basis looking to permanent peace.

It would surprise me if the Germans did not come out in the open soon and declare that they have always been for peace, that they are for peace now, and that they are willing to enter into a compact which would insure peace for all time; that they have been misrepresented and maligned and that they leave the entire responsibility for the continuation of the war with the Allies.

If they should do this, it would create a profound impression, and if it was not met with sympathy by the Allies, the neutral sentiment, which is now almost wholly against the Germans, would veer toward them.

Will you not convey this thought to Sir Edward and let me know what he says?

The President is willing and anxious for me to go to England and Germany as soon as there is anything tangible to go on, and whenever my presence will be welcome. The Germans have already indicated this feeling but I have not been able to get from Spring Rice any expression from his government.

As I told you before, the President does not wish to offend the sensibilities of anyone by premature action, but he is, of course, enormously interested in initiating at least tentative conversations.

Will you not advise me in regard to this?

Faithfully yours,

E. M. House.

Why was Colonel House so confident that the Dual Alliance was prepared at this time to discuss terms of peace? Colonel House, as his letter shows, was in communication with Zimmermann, the German Under Foreign Secretary. But a more important approach had just been made, though information bearing on this had not been sent to Page. The Kaiser had asked President Wilson to transmit to Great Britain a suggestion for making peace on the basis of surrendering Belgium and of paying for its restoration. It seems incredible that the Ambassador should not have been told of this, but Page learned of the proposal from Field Marshal French, then commanding the British armies in the field. Page has left a memorandum which explains the whole strange proceeding —a paper which is interesting not only for its contents, but as an illustration of the unofficial way in which diplomacy was conducted in Washington at this time:

Field Marshal Sir John French, secretly at home from his command of the English Forces in France, invited me to luncheon. . . . The military situation is this: a trench stalemate in France. Neither army has made appreciable progress in three months. Neither can advance without a great loss of men. Neither is whipped. Neither can conquer. It would require a million more men than the Allies can com-

mand and a very long time to drive the Germans back across Belgium.

What then? The Allies are still stronger—so long as they hold together as one man. But is it reasonable to assume that they can? And, even if they can, is it worth while to win a complete victory at such a cost as the lives of practically all the able-bodied men in Europe? But can the Allies hold together as one man for two or three or four years? Well, what are we going to do? And here came the news of the lunch. General French informed me that the President had sent to England, at the request of the Kaiser, a proposal looking toward peace, Germany offering to give up Belgium and to pay for its restoration.

"This," said Sir John, "is their fourth proposal."

"And," he went on, "if they will restore Belgium and give Alsace-Lorraine to France and Constantinople will go to Russia, I can't see how we can refuse it."

. . . . . .

Now—did General French send for me and tell me this just for fun and just because he likes me? He was very eager to know my opinion whether this peace offer were genuine or whether it was a trick of the Germans to—publish it later and thereby to throw the blame for continuing the war on England?

It occurs to me as possible that he was directed to tell me what he told, trusting to me, in spite of his protestations of personal confidence, etc., to get it to the President. Assuming that the President sent the Kaiser's message to the King, this may be a suggested informal answer—that if the offer be extended to give France and Russia what they want, it will be considered, etc. This may or may not be true. Alas!

the fact that I know nothing about the offer has no meaning; for the State Department never informs me of anything it takes up with the British Ambassador in Washington. Well, I'll see.

These were therefore the reasons why Colonel House had decided to go to Europe and enter into peace negotiations with the warring powers. . . . His letter intimates that the German Government was eager to have him cross the ocean on this particular mission; it discloses, on the other hand, that the British Government regarded the proposed negotiations with no enthusiasm. Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Asquith would have been glad to end hostilities on terms that would permanently establish peace and abolish the vices which were responsible for the war, and they were ready to welcome courteously the President's representative and discuss the situation with him in a fair-minded spirit. But they did not believe that such an enterprise could serve a useful purpose. Possibly the military authorities did not believe that either side could win a decisive victory, but this was not the belief of the British public itself. The atmosphere in England at that time was one of confidence in the success of British arms and of suspicion and distrust of the British Government. A strong expectation prevailed in the popular mind, that the three great Powers of the Entente would at an early date destroy the menace which had enshrouded Europe for forty years, and there was no intention of giving Germany a breathing spell during which she could regenerate her forces to resume the onslaught.

Colonel House reached London early in February and was soon in close consultation with the Prime Minister and Sir Edward Grey. He made a great

personal success; the British statesmen gained a high regard for his disinterestedness and his general desire to serve the cause of decency among nations; but he made little progress in his peace plans, simply because the facts were so discouraging and so impregnable. Sir Edward repeated to him what he had already said to Page many times: that Great Britain was prepared to discuss a peace that would really safeguard the future of Europe, but was not prepared to discuss one that would merely reinstate the régime that had existed before 1914. The fact that the Germans were not ready to accept such a peace made discussion useless. Disappointed at this failure, Colonel House left for Berlin. His letters to Page show that the British judgment of Germany was not unjust and that the warnings which Page had sent to Washington were based on facts:

From Edward M. House

Embassy of the United States of America,
Berlin, Germany,
March 20, 1915.

DEAR PAGE:

I arrived yesterday morning and I saw Zimmermann almost immediately. He was very cordial and talked to me frankly and sensibly.

I tried to bring about a better feeling toward England, and told him how closely their interests touched at certain points. I also told him of the broad way in which Sir Edward was looking at the difficult problems that confronted Europe, and I expressed the hope that this view would be reciprocated elsewhere, so that, when the final settlement came, it could be

made in a way that would be to the advantage of mankind.

. . . . . .

Zimmermann said that it was impossible for them to make any peace overtures, and he gave me to understand that, for the moment, even what England would perhaps consent to now, could not be accepted by Germany, to say nothing of what France had in mind. . . .

Faithfully yours,
E. M. House.

From Edward M. House

Embassy of the United States of America,
Berlin, Germany.
March 26, 1915.

Dear Page:

While I have accomplished here much that is of value, yet I leave sadly disappointed that no direct move can be made toward peace.

The Civil Government are ready, and upon terms that would at least make an opening. There is also a large number in military and naval circles that I believe would be glad to begin parleys, but the trouble is mainly with the people. It is a very dangerous thing to permit a people to be misled and their minds inflamed either by the press, by speeches, or otherwise.

In my opinion, no government could live here at this time if peace was proposed upon terms that would have any chance of acceptance. Those in civil authority that I have met are as reasonable and fairminded

as their counterparts in England or America, but, for the moment, they are impotent.

I hear on every side the old story that all Germany wants is a permanent guaranty of peace, so that she may proceed upon her industrial career undisturbed.

. . . . . .

Faithfully yours,
E. M. House.

The ink on those words was scarcely dry when a message from Queenstown was handed to the American Ambassador. A German submarine had torpedoed and sunk the *Lusitania* off the Old Head of Kinsale, and one hundred and twenty-four American men, women, and children had been drowned.

CHAPTER X

THE "LUSITANIA"—AND AFTER

THE news of the *Lusitania* was received at the American Embassy at four o'clock on the afternoon of May 7, 1915. At that time preparations were under way for a dinner in honor of Colonel and Mrs. House; the first *Lusitania* announcement declared that only the ship itself had been destroyed and that all the passengers and members of the crew had been saved; there was, therefore, no good reason for abandoning this dinner.

At about seven o'clock, the Ambassador came home; his manner showed that something extraordinary had taken place; there were no outward signs of emotion, but he was very serious. The first news, he now informed Mrs. Page, had been a mistake; more than one thousand men, women, and children had lost their lives, and more than one hundred of these were American citizens. It was too late to postpone the dinner but that affair was one of the most tragic in the social history of London. The Ambassador was constantly receiving bulletins from his Chancery, and these, as quickly as they were received, he read to his guests. His voice was quiet and subdued; there were no indications of excitement in his manner or in that of his friends, and hardly of suppressed emotion. The atmosphere was rather that of dumb stupefaction. The news seemed to have dulled everyone's capacity for thought and even for

feeling. If anyone spoke, it was in whispers. Afterward, in the drawing room, this same mental state was the prevailing one; there was little denunciation of Germany and practically no discussion as to the consequences of the crime; everyone's thought was engrossed by the harrowing and unbelievable facts which the Ambassador was reading from the little yellow slips that were periodically brought in. An irresistible fascination evidently kept everybody in the room; the guests stayed late, eager for every new item. When they finally left, one after another, their manner was still abstracted and they said their good-nights in low voices. There were two reasons for this behavior. The first was that the Ambassador and his guests had received the details of the greatest infamy which any supposedly civilized state had perpetrated since the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. The second was the conviction that the United States would at once declare war on Germany.

On this latter point several of the guests expressed their ideas and one of the most shocked and outspoken was Colonel House. For a month the President's personal representative had been discussing with British statesmen possible openings for mediation, but all his hopes in this direction now vanished. That President Wilson would act with the utmost energy Colonel House took for granted. This act, he evidently believed, left the United States no option. "We shall be at war with Germany within a month," he declared.

The sensations of most Americans in London during this crisis are almost indescribable. Washington's failure promptly to meet the situation affected them with astonishment and humiliation. Colonel House, confident that war was impending, hurried his preparations to leave England; he wished to be in the United

States, at the President's side, when the declaration was made. With this feeling about Mr. Wilson, Colonel House received a fearful shock a day or two after the *Lusitania* had gone down: while walking in Piccadilly, he caught a glimpse of one of the famous sandwich men, bearing a poster of an afternoon newspaper. This glaring broadside bore the following legend: "We are too proud to fight—Woodrow Wilson."

The sight of that placard was Colonel House's first intimation that the President might not act vigorously. He made no attempt to conceal from Page the shock which it had given him. Soon the whole of England was ringing with these six words; the newspapers were filled with stinging editorials and cartoons, and the music halls found in the Wilsonian phrase materials for their choicest gibes. Even in more serious quarters America was the subject of the most severe denunciation. No one felt these strictures more poignantly than President Wilson's closest confidant. A day or two before sailing home he came into the Embassy greatly depressed at the prevailing revulsion against the United States. "I feel," Colonel House said to Page, "as though I had been given a kick at every lamp post coming down Constitution Hill."

And now came the period of distress and of disillusionment. Three *Lusitania* notes were sent and were evasively answered by Germany, and Washington still seemed to be marking time. The one significant event in this exciting period, Mr. Bryan's resignation as Secretary of State, seemed likely to have important consequences for Page. Colonel House and others strongly urged the President to call the Ambassador home from London and make him Secretary of State. This was the third position in

President Wilson's cabinet for which Page had been considered. Of all cabinet posts, however, the one that would have especially attracted him would have been the Department of State. But President Wilson believed that the appointment of an Ambassador at one of the belligerent capitals, especially of an Ambassador whose sympathies for the Allies were so pronounced as were Page's, would have been an "unneutral" act, and, therefore, Colonel House's recommendation was not approved.

Page, pinning his faith in President Wilson, still had confidence in the President's determination to uphold the national honor. Page was not one of those who thought that the United States should declare war immediately after the *Lusitania*. The President's course, in giving Germany a chance to make amends and to disavow the act, met with his approval, and he found, also, much to admire in Mr. Wilson's first *Lusitania* note. His judgment in this matter was based first of all upon the merits of the case; besides this, his admiration for Mr. Wilson as a public man was strong. To think otherwise of the President would have been a great grief to the Ambassador and to differ with his chief on the tremendous issue of the war would have meant for Page the severance of one of the most cherished associations of his life.

But in the summer and autumn of 1915 one agony followed another. The "too proud to fight" speech was in Page's mind nothing less than a tragedy. The President's first *Lusitania* note for a time restored the Ambassador's confidence; it seemed to show that the President intended to hold Germany to that "strict accountability" which he had threatened. But Mr. Wilson's course now presented new difficulties to his Ambassador. Still Page believed that the President,

in his own way and in his own time, would find a path out of his dilemma that would protect the honor and the safety of the United States. If any of the Embassy subordinates became impatient over the procedure of Washington, he did not find a sympathetic listener in the Ambassador. The whole of London and of Europe might be resounding with denunciations of the White House, but Page would tolerate no manifestations of hostility in his presence. "The problem appears different to Washington than it does to us," he would say to his confidants. "We see only one side of it; the President sees all sides. If we give him all the facts, he will decide the thing wisely."

Events, however, eventually proved too strong for the most devoted supporter of President Wilson. After the *Arabic* and the *Hesperian,* Page's official intimates saw signs that the Ambassador was losing confidence in his old friend. He would discuss Mr. Wilson occasionally, with those in whom his confidence was strongest; his expressions, however, were never flippant or violent. That Page could be biting as well as brilliant in his comments on public personages his letters abundantly reveal, yet he never exercised his talent for sarcasm or invective at the expense of the White House. He never forgot that Mr. Wilson was President and that he was Ambassador; he would still defend the Administration; and he even now continued to find consolation in the reflection that Mr. Wilson was living in a different atmosphere and that he had difficulties to confront of which a man in London could know nothing.

The Ambassador's emotion was rather one of disappointment and sorrow, mingled with anxiety as to the plight into which his country was being led. As to his duty in this situation, however, Page never hesi-

tated. In his relations with his Embassy and with the British world he maintained this non-critical attitude; but in his letters to President Wilson and Colonel House, he was describing the situation, and expressing his convictions, with the utmost freedom and frankness. In both these attitudes Page was consistent and absolutely loyal. It was his duty to carry out the Wilson instructions and he had too high a conception of the ambassadorial office to show to the world any unfavorable opinions he may have held about his country's course. His duty to his post made it just as imperative that he set forth to the President the facts exactly as they were.

And this the Ambassador now proceeded to do. For the mere ornamental dignities of an Ambassadorship Page cared nothing; he was wasting his health in his duties and exhausting his private resources; much as he loved the English and congenial as were his surroundings, the fear of being recalled for "disloyalty" or insubordination never influenced him. The letters which he now wrote to Colonel House and to President Wilson himself are probably without parallel in the diplomatic annals of this or of any other country. In them he told the President precisely what Englishmen thought of him and of the extent to which the United States was suffering in European estimation from the Wilson policy. His boldness sometimes astounded his associates.

One day a friend and adviser of President Wilson came into the Ambassador's office just as Page had finished one of his communications to Washington.

"Read that!" the Ambassador said, handing over the manuscript to his visitor.

As the caller read, his countenance displayed the progressive stages of his amazement. When he had

finished, his hands dropped helplessly upon his knees.

"Is that the way you write to the President?" he gasped.

"Of course," Page replied, quietly. "Why not? Why shouldn't I tell him the truth? That is what I am here for."

"There is no other person in the world who dare talk to him like that!" was the reply.

This is unquestionably the fact. When Mr. Wilson found that one of his former confidants had turned out to be a critic, that man instantaneously passed out of his life. And this was now Page's fate; the friendship and associations of forty years were as though they had never been. Just why Mr. Wilson did not recall his Ambassador is a question that has puzzled Page's friends. He would sometimes refer to him as a man who was "more British than the British," as one who had been taken completely captive by British blandishments, but he never came to the point of dismissing him. Perhaps he did not care to face the public scandal that such an act would have caused; but a more plausible reason is that Page, despite the causes which he had given for irritation, was indispensable to him. Page's early letters had furnished the President ideas which had taken shape in Wilson's policies, and, disagreeable as the communications now became, there are evidences that they influenced the solitary statesman in the White House, and that they had much to do in finally forcing Mr. Wilson into the war. The alternative question, as to why Page did not retire when he found himself so out of sympathy with the President, will be sufficiently answered in subsequent chapters; at present it may be said that he did resign and only consented to remain at the urgent request of Washington. In fact, all during 1915 and

1916, there seemed to be a fear in Washington that Page would definitely abandon the London post.

On one occasion, when the newspapers published rumors to this effect, Page received an urgent despatch from Mr. Lansing. The message came at a time—the date was October 26, 1915—when Page was especially discouraged over the Washington policy. "Representatives of the press," said Mr. Lansing, "have repeated rumors that you are planning to resign. These have been brought to the President's attention, and both he and I have denied them. Still these rumors persist, and they cause both the President and me great anxiety. We cannot believe that they are well founded.

"In view of the fact that they are so persistent, we have thought it well to inform you of them and to tell you how earnestly we hope that they are baseless. We trust that you will set both our minds at rest."

If Page had ever had any compunction about addressing the President in blunt phrases these expressions certainly convinced him that he was a free agent.

To Edward M. House

July 21, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

I enclose a pamphlet in ridicule of the President. I don't know who wrote it, for my inquiries so far have brought no real information. I don't feel like sending it to him. I send it to you—to do with as you think best. This thing alone is, of course, of no consequence. But it is symptomatic. There is much feeling about the slowness with which he acts. One hundred and twenty people (Americans) were

drowned on the *Lusitania* and we are still writing notes about it. . . . Anybody who knows the Germans knows, of course, that they are simply playing for time, that they are not going to "come down," that Von Tirpitz is on deck, that they'd just as lief have war with us as not—perhaps had rather—because they don't want any large nation left fresh when the war ends. They'd like to have the whole world bankrupt. There is a fast growing feeling here, therefore, that the American Government is pusillanimous—dallies with 'em, is affected by the German propaganda, etc., etc. Of course, such a judgment is not fair. It is formed without knowing the conditions in the United States. But I think you ought to realize the strength of this sentiment. No doubt before you receive this, the President will send something to Germany that will amount to an ultimatum and there will be at least a momentary change of sentiment here. But looking at the thing in a long-range way, we're bound to get into the war. For the Germans will blow up more American travelers without notice. And by dallying with them we do not change the ultimate result, but we take away from ourselves the spunk and credit of getting in instead of being kicked and cursed in. We've got to get in: they won't play the game in any other way. I have news direct from a high German source in Berlin which strongly confirms this. . . .

It's a curious thing to say. But the only solution that I see is another *Lusitania* outrage, which would force war.

W. H. P.

The prophecy contained in this letter was quickly fulfilled. A week or two after Colonel House had

received it, the *Arabic* was sunk with loss of American life.

"That settles it," said Page to his son. "They have sunk the *Arabic*. That means that we shall break with Germany and I've got to go back to London."

To Edward M. House

London, September 2nd, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

You write me about pleasing the Allies, the big Ally in particular. That doesn't particularly appeal to me. We don't owe them anything. There's no obligation. I'd never confess for a moment that we are under any obligation to any of them nor to anybody. I'm not out to "please" anybody, as a primary purpose: that's not my game nor my idea—nor yours either. As for England in particular, the account was squared when she twice sent an army against us—in her folly—especially the last time, when she burnt our Capitol. There's been no obligation since. The obligation is on the other foot. We've set her an example of what democracy will do for men, an example of efficiency, an example of freedom of opportunity. The future is ours, and she may follow us and profit by it. Already we have three white English-speaking men to every two in the British Empire: we are sixty per cent. of the Anglo-Saxons in the world. If there be any obligation to please, the obligation is on her to please us. And she feels and sees it now.

My point is not that, nor is it what we or any other neutral nation has done or may do—Holland or any other. This war is the direct result of the over-polite, diplomatic, standing-aloof, bowing-to-one-another in

gold lace, which all European nations are guilty of in times of peace—castes and classes and uniforms and orders and such folderol, instead of the proper business of the day. Every nation in Europe knew that Germany was preparing for war. If they had really got together—not mere Hague Sunday-school talk and resolutions—but had really got together for business and had said to Germany, "The moment you fire a shot, we'll all fight against you; we have so many millions of men, so many men-of-war, so many billions of money; and we'll increase all these if you do not change your system and your building-up of armies"—then there would have been no war.

My point is not sentimental. It is:

(1) We must maintain our own self-respect and safety. If we submit to too many insults, *that* will in time bring Germany against us. We've got to show at some time that we don't believe, either, in the efficacy of Sunday-School resolves for peace—that we are neither Daughters of the Dove of Peace nor Sons of the Olive Branch, and

(2) About nagging and forever presenting technical legal points as lawyers do to confuse juries—the point is the point of efficiency. If we do that, we can't carry our main points. I find it harder and harder to get answers now to important questions because we ask so many unimportant and nagging ones.

I've no sentiment—perhaps not enough. My gushing days are gone, if I ever had 'em. The cutting-out of the "100 years of peace" oratory, etc., etc., was one of the blessings of the war. But we must be just and firm and preserve our own self-respect and keep alive the fear that other nations have of us; and we ought to have the courage to make the Department of State more than a bureau of complaints. We must

learn to say "No" even to a Gawdamighty independent American citizen when he asks an improper or impracticable question. Public opinion in the United States consists of something more than the threats of Congressmen and the bleating of newspapers; it consists of the judgment of honorable men on courageous and frank actions—a judgment that cannot be made up till action is taken.

Heartily yours,
W. H. P.

To Edward M. House

London, Tuesday night, Sept. 8, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

. . . They are laughing at Uncle Sam here—it comes near to being ridicule, in fact, for seeming to jump at Bernstorff's unfrank assurances. And, as I have telegraphed the President, English opinion is—well, it is very nearly disrespectful. Men say here (I mean our old friends) that with no disavowal of the *Lusitania,* the *Falaba,* the *Gulflight,* or the *Arabic* or of the *Hesperian,* the Germans are "stuffing" Uncle Sam, that Uncle Sam is in the clutches of the peace-at-any-price public opinion, that the United States will suffer any insult and do nothing. I hardly pick up a paper that does not have a sarcastic paragraph or cartoon. We are on the brink of convincing the English that we'll not act, whatever the provocation. By the English, I do not mean the lighter, transitory public opinion, but I mean the thoughtful men who do not wish us or expect us to fire a gun.

They say that the American democracy, since Cleveland's day, has become a mere agglomeration

of different races, without national unity, national aims, and without courage or moral qualities. And (I deeply regret to say) the President is losing here the high esteem he won by his Panama tolls repeal. They ask, why on earth did he raise the issue if under repeated provocation he is unable to recall Gerard or to send Bernstorff home? The *Hesperian* follows the *Arabic;* other "liners" will follow the *Hesperian,* if the Germans have submarines. And, when Sackville-West [1] was promptly sent home for answering a private citizen's inquiry about the two political parties, Dumba is (yet awhile) retained in spite of a far graver piece of business. There is a tone of sad disappointment here—not because the most thoughtful men want us in the war (they don't), but because for some reason, which nobody here understands, the President, having taken a stand, seems unable to do anything.

(Here comes a parenthesis. Word came to me a little while ago that a Zeppelin was on its way to London. Such a remark doesn't arouse much attention. But just as I had finished the fifth line above this, Frank and Mrs. Page came in and challenged me to play a game of cards before we should go to bed. We sat down, the cards were dealt, and bang! bang!—with the deep note of an explosion. A third, a fourth shot. We went into the street. There the Zeppelin was revealed by a searchlight—sailing along. I think it had probably dropped its bombs; but the

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[1] Sir Lionel Sackville-West was British Minister to the United States from 1881 to 1883. In the latter year a letter was published which he had written to an American citizen of British origin, the gist of which was that the reëlection of President Cleveland would be of advantage to British interests. For this gross interference in American domestic affairs, President Cleveland immediately handed Sir Lionel his passports. The incident ended his diplomatic career.

aircraft guns were cracking away at it. Some of them shot explosive projectiles to find the range. Now and then one such explosive would almost reach the Zeppelin, but it was too high for them and it sailed away, the air guns doing their ineffectual best. I couldn't see whether airplanes were trying to shoot it or not. The searchlight revealed the Zeppelin but nothing else.—While we were watching this battle in the air, the maids came down from the top of the house and went into the cellar. I think they've already gone back. You can't imagine how little excitement it caused. It produces less fright than any other conceivable engine of war.

We came back as soon as the Zeppelin was out of sight and the firing had ceased; we played our game of cards; and here I am writing you the story—all within about half an hour.—There was a raid over London last night, too, wherein a dozen or two women and children and a few men were killed. I haven't the slightest idea what harm this raid tonight has done. For all I know it may not be all done. But of all imaginable war experiences this seems the most futile. It interrupted a game of cards for twenty minutes!)

When I am asked every day "Why the United States doesn't *do* something—send Dumba and Bernstorff home?"—Well, it is not the easiest question in the world to answer.

Yours heartily,
W. H. P.

Friday, September 10, 1915.

P. S. The news is just come that Dumba is dismissed. That will clear the atmosphere—a little, but only a little. Dumba committed a diplomatic of-

fense. The German Government has caused the death of United States citizens, has defied us, has declared it had changed its policy and yet has gone on with the same old policy. Besides, Bernstorff has done everything that Dumba did except employ Archibald, which was a mere incident of the game. The President took a strong stand: they have disregarded it—no apology nor reparation for a single boat that has been sunk. Now the English opinion of the Germans is hardly a calm, judicial opinion—of course not. There may be facts that have not been made known. There must be good reasons that nobody here can guess, why the President doesn't act in the long succession of German acts against us. *But I tell you with all solemnity that British opinion and the British Government have absolutely lost their respect for us and their former high estimate of the President. And that former respect is gone for good unless he acts now very quickly.* They will pay nothing more than formal and polite attention to anything we may hereafter say. This is not resentful. They don't particularly care for us to get into the war. Their feeling (I mean among our best old friends) is not resentful. It is simply sorrowful. They had the highest respect for our people and our President. The Germans defy us; we sit in silence. They conclude here that we'll submit to anything from anybody. We'll write strong notes—nothing more.

. . . . . .

I needn't and can't write more. Of course there are more important things than English respect. But the English think that every Power has lost respect for us—the Germans most of all. And (unless the President acts very rigorously and very quickly) we'll

have to get along a long time without British respect.

W. H. P.

P. S. The last Zeppelin raid—which interrupted the game of cards—killed more than twenty persons and destroyed more than seven million dollars' worth of private business property—all non-combatants'!

W. H. P.

The letters which Page sent directly to the President were just as frank. "Incidents occur nearly every day," he wrote to President Wilson in the autumn of 1915, "which reveal the feeling that the Germans have taken us in. Last week one of our naval men, Lieutenant McBride, who has just been ordered home, asked the Admiralty if he might see the piece of metal found on the deck of the *Hesperian*. Contrary to their habit, the British officer refused. 'Take my word for it,' he said. 'She was torpedoed. Why do you wish to investigate? Your country will do nothing—will accept any excuse, any insult and—do nothing.' . . .

A sort of pro-German American newspaper correspondent came along the other day from the German headquarters; and he told me that one of the German generals remarked to him: 'War with America? Ach no! Not war. If trouble should come, we'd send over a platoon of our policemen to whip your little army.' (He didn't say just how he'd send 'em.)"

To the President

American Embassy, London, Oct. 5, 1915.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I have two letters that I have lately written to you but which I have not sent because they utterly lack

good cheer. After reading them over, I have not liked to send them. Yet I should fail of my duty if I did not tell you bad news as well as good.

The high esteem in which our government was held when the first *Lusitania* note to Germany was sent seems all changed to indifference or pity—not hatred or hostility, but a sort of hopeless and sad pity. That ship was sunk just five months ago; the German Government (or its Ambassador) is yet holding conversations about the principle involved, making "concessions" and promises for the future, and so far we have done nothing to hold the Germans to accountability.[1] In the meantime their submarine fleet has been so reduced that probably the future will take care of itself and we shall be used as a sort of excuse for their failure. This is what the English think and say; and they explain our failure to act by concluding that the peace-at-any-price sentiment dominates the Government and paralyzes it. They have now, I think, given up hope that we will ever take any action. So deeply rooted (and, I fear, permanent) is this feeling that every occurrence is made to fit into and to strengthen this supposition. When Dumba was dismissed, they said: "Dumba, merely the abject tool of German intrigue. Why not Bernstorff?" When the Anglo-French loan[2] was oversubscribed, they said: "The people's sympathy is most welcome, but their government is paralyzed." Their respect is gone—at least for the time being.

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[1] In a communication sent February 10, 1915, President Wilson warned the German Government that he would hold it to a "strict accountability" for the loss of American lives by illegal submarine attack.

[2] A reference to the Anglo-French loan for $500,000,000, placed in the United States in the autumn of 1915.

It is not that they expect us to go to war: many, in fact, do not wish us to. They expected that we would be as good as our word and hold the Germans to accountability. Now I fear they think little of our word. I shudder to think what our relations might be if Sir Edward Grey were to yield to another as Foreign Minister, as, of course, he must yield at some time. . . .

It comes down and comes back to this—that for five months after the sinking of the *Lusitania* the Germans are yet playing with us, that we have not sent Bernstorff home, and hence that we will submit to any rebuff or any indignity. It is under these conditions—under this judgment of us—that we now work—the English respect for our Government indefinitely lessened and instead of the old-time respect a sad pity. I cannot write more.

Heartily yours,
WALTER H. PAGE.

On January 3, 1916, Page sent the President a mass of clippings from the British press, all criticizing the Wilson Administration in unrestrained terms. In his comment on these, he writes the President:

"Public opinion, both official and unofficial, is expressed by these newspaper comments, with far greater restraint than it is expressed in private conversation. Ridicule of the Administration runs through the programs of the theaters; it inspires hundreds of cartoons; it is a staple of conversation at private dinners and in the clubs. The most serious class of Englishmen, including the best friends of the United States, feel that the Administration's reliance on notes has reduced our government to a third- or fourth-rate power. There is even talk of spheres of

German influence in the United States as in China. No government could fall lower in English opinion than we shall fall if more notes are sent to Austria or to Germany. The only way to keep any shred of English respect is the immediate dismissal without more parleying of every German and Austrian official at Washington. Nobody here believes that such an act would provoke war.

"I can do no real service by mincing matters. My previous telegrams and letters have been purposely restrained as this one is. We have now come to the parting of the ways. If English respect be worth preserving at all, it can be preserved only by immediate action. Any other course than immediate severing of diplomatic relations with both Germany and Austria will deepen the English opinion into a conviction that the Administration was insincere when it sent the *Lusitania* notes and that its notes and protests need not be taken seriously on any subject. And English opinion is allied opinion. The Italian Ambassador said to me, 'What has happened? The United States of to-day is not the United States I knew fifteen years ago, when I lived in Washington.' French officers and members of the Government who come here express themselves even more strongly than do the British. The British newspapers to-day publish translations of ridicule of the United States from German papers."

One of the reasons why Page felt so intensely about American policy at this time was his conviction that the severance of diplomatic relations, in the latter part of 1915, or the early part of 1916, in itself would have brought the European War to an end. This was a conviction from which he never departed. Count Bernstorff was industriously creating the impres-

sion in the United States that his dismissal would immediately cause war between Germany and the United States, and there is little doubt that the Administration accepted this point of view. But Page believed that this was nothing but Prussian bluff. The severance of diplomatic relations at that time, in Page's opinion, would have convinced the Germans of the hopelessness of their cause.

In spite of the British blockade, Germany was drawing enormous quantities of food supplies from the United States, and without these supplies she could not maintain indefinitely her resistance. The severance of diplomatic relations would naturally have been accompanied by an embargo suspending trade between the United States and the Fatherland. Moreover, the consideration that was mainly leading Germany to hope for success was the belief that she could embroil the United States and Great Britain over the blockade. A break with Germany would of course mean an end to that maneuver. Page regarded all Mr. Wilson's attempts to make peace in 1914 and early 1915—before the *Lusitania*—as mistakes, for reasons that have already been set forth. Now, however, he believed that the President had a real opportunity to end the war and the unparalleled suffering which it was causing. The mere dismissal of Bernstorff, in the Ambassador's opinion, would accomplish this result.

In a communication sent to the President on February 15, 1916, he made this plain.

To the President

February 15, 7 P. M.

The Cabinet has directed the censor to suppress, as far as he can with prudence, comment which is un-

favorable to the United States. He has taken this action because the public feeling against the Administration is constantly increasing. Because the *Lusitania* controversy has been going on so long, and because the Germans are using it in their renewed U-boat campaign, the opinion of this country has reached a point where only prompt action can bring a turn in the tide. Therefore my loyalty to you would not be complete if I should refrain from sending, in the most respectful terms, the solemn conviction which I hold about our opportunity and our duty.

If you immediately refuse to have further parley or to yield one jot or tittle of your original *Lusitania* notes, and if you at once break diplomatic relations with the German Empire, and then declare the most vigorous embargo of the Central Powers, you will quickly end the war. There will be an immediate collapse in German credit. If there are any Allies who are wavering, such action will hold them in line. Certain European neutrals—Sweden, Rumania, Greece, and others—will put up a firm resistance to Germanic influences and certain of them will take part with Great Britain and France. There will be an end at once to the German propaganda, which is now world-wide. The moral weight of our country will be a determining influence and bring an early peace. The credit you will receive for such a decision will make you immortal and even the people of Germany will be forever grateful.

It is my conviction that we would not be called upon to fire a gun or to lose one human life.

Above all, such an action will settle the whole question of permanent peace. The absolute and grateful loyalty of the whole British Empire, of the British Fleet, and of all the Allied countries will be ours.

The great English-speaking nations will be able to control the details of the peace and this without any formal alliance. There will be an incalculable saving of human life and of treasure. Such an act will make it possible for Germany to give in honorably and with good grace because the whole world will be against her. Her bankrupt and blockaded people will bring such pressure to bear that the decision will be hastened.

The sympathies of the American people will be brought in line with the Administration.

If we settle the *Lusitania* question by compromising in any way your original demands, or if we permit it to drag on longer, America can have no part in bringing the war to an end. The current of allied opinion will run so strongly against the Administration that no censorship and no friendly interference by an allied government can stem the distrust of our government which is now so strong in Europe.

We shall gain by any further delay only a dangerous, thankless, and opulent isolation. The *Lusitania* is the turning point in our history. The time to act is now.

PAGE.

CHAPTER XI

DARK DAYS FOR THE ALLIES

To Edward M. House

June 30, 1915.

My dear House:

There's a distinct wave of depression here—perhaps I'd better say a period of setbacks has come. So far as we can find out only the Germans are doing anything in the war on land. The position in France is essentially the same as it was in November, only the Germans are much more strongly entrenched. Their great plenty of machine guns enables them to use fewer men and to kill more than the Allies. The Russians also lack ammunition and are yielding more and more territory. The Allies—so you hear now—will do well if they get their little army away from the Dardanelles before the German-Turks eat 'em alive, and no Balkan state comes in to help the Allies. Italy makes progress—slowly, of course, over almost impassable mountains—etc., etc. . . .

At any rate, it is true that a great wave of discouragement is come. All these events and more seem to prove to my mind the rather dismal failure the Liberal Government made—a failure really to grasp the problem. It was a dead failure. Of course they are waking up now, when they are faced with a certain dread lest many soldiers prefer frankly to die rather than spend another winter in practically the same

trenches. You hear rumors, too, of great impending military scandals—God knows whether there be any truth in them or not.

In a word, while no Englishman gives up or will ever give up—that's all rot—the job he has in hand is not going well. He's got to spit on his hands and buckle up his belt two holes tighter yet. And I haven't seen a man for a month who dares hope for an end of the fight within any time that he can foresee.

The Germans have been preparing northern France for German occupation. No French are left there, of course, except women and children and old men. They must be fed or starved or deported. The Germans put them on trains—a whole village at a time—and run them to the Swiss frontier. Of course the Swiss pass them on into France. The French have their own and—the Germans will have northern France without any French population, if this process goes on long enough.

The mere bang! bang! frightful era of the war is passed. The Germans are settling down to permanent business with their great organizing machine. Of course they talk about the freedom of the seas and such mush-mush; of course they'd like to have Paris and rob it of enough money to pay what the war has cost them, and London, too. But what they really want for keeps is seacoast—Belgium and as much of the French coast as they can win. That's really what they are out gunning for. Of course, somehow at some time they mean to get Holland, too, and Denmark, if they really need it. Then they'll have a very respectable seacoast—the thing that they chiefly lack now.

. . . . . .

It's got hot in London—hotter than I've ever known it. It gets lonelier (more people going away) and sadder—more wounded coming back and more visible sorrow. We seem to be settling down to something that is more or less like Paris—so far less, but it may become more and more like it. And the confident note of an earlier period is accompanied by a dull undertone of much less cheerfulness. The end is—in the lap of the gods.

W. H. P.

To Arthur W. Page

American Embassy, London,
July 25, 1915.

DEAR ARTHUR:

. . . Many men here are very active in their thought about the future relations of the United States and Great Britain. Will the war bring or leave them closer together? . . . I'll indicate to you some of my cogitations on this subject by trying to repeat what I told Philip Kerr [1] a fortnight ago—one Sunday in the country. I can write this to you without seeming to parade my own opinions.—Kerr is one of "The Round Table," perhaps the best group of men here for the real study and free discussion of large political subjects. . . . He is red hot for a close and perfect understanding between Great Britain and the United States. I told him that, since Great Britain had only about forty per cent. of the white English-speaking people and the United States had about sixty per cent., I hoped in his natural history that the tail didn't wag the dog. I went on:

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[1] Afterward private secretary to Premier Lloyd George.

"You now have the advantage of us in your aggregation of three centuries of accumulated wealth—the spoil of all the world—and in the talent that you have developed for conserving it and adding to it and in the institutions you have built up to perpetuate it—your merchant ships, your insurance, your world-wide banking, your mortgages on all new lands; but isn't this the only advantage you have? This advantage will pass. You are now shooting away millions and millions, and you will have a debt that is bound to burden industry.

On our side, we have a more recently mixed race than yours; you've begun to inbreed. We have also (and therefore) more adaptability, a greater keenness of mind in our masses; we are Old-World men set free—free of classes and traditions and all that they connote. Your so-called democracy is far behind ours. Your aristocracy and your privileges necessarily bring a social and economic burden. Half your people look backward.

"Your leadership rests on your wealth and on the power that you've built on your wealth."

When he asked me how we were to come closer together—"closer together, with your old-time distrust of us and with your remoteness?"—I stopped him at "remoteness."

"That's the reason," I said. "Your idea of our 'remoteness.' 'Remoteness' from what? From you? Are you not betraying the only real difficulty of a closer sympathy by assuming that you are the center of the world? When you bring yourself to think of the British Empire as a part of the American Union—mind you, I am not saying that you would be formally admitted—but when you are yourselves in close enough sympathy with us to wish to be admitted, the chief

difficulty of a real union of thought will be gone. You recall Lord Rosebery's speech in which he pictured the capital of the British Empire being moved to Washington if the American Colonies had been retained under the Crown? Well, it was the Crown that was the trouble, and the capital of English-speaking folk has been so moved and you still remain 'remote.' Drop 'remote' from your vocabulary and your thought and we'll actually be closer together."

It's an enormous problem—just how to bring these countries closer together. Perhaps nothing can do it but some great common danger or some great common adventure. But this is one of the problems of your life-time. England can't get itself clean loose from the continent nor from continental medievalism; and with that we can have nothing to do. Men like Kerr think that somehow a great push toward democracy here will be given by the war. I don't quite see how. So far the aristocracy have made perhaps the best showing in defense of English liberty. They are paying the bills of the war; they have sent their sons; these sons have died like men; and their parents never whimper. It's a fine breed for such great uses as these. There was a fine incident in the House of Lords the other day, which gave the lie to the talk that one used to hear about "degeneracy." Somebody made a perfectly innocent proposal to complete a list of peers and peers' sons who had fallen in the war—a thing that will, of course, be done, just as a similar list will be compiled of the House of Commons, of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. But one peer after another objected vigorously lest such a list appear immodest. "We are but doing our duty. Let the matter rest there."

In a time like this the aristocracy proves its worth.

In fact, all aristocracies grew chiefly out of wars, and perhaps they are better for wars than a real democracy. Here, you see, you run into one of those contradictions in life and history which make the world so hard to change. . . .

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

One happiness came to Mr. and Mrs. Page in the midst of all these war alarums. On August 4, 1915, their only daughter, Katharine, was married to Mr. Charles G. Loring, of Boston, Massachusetts. The occasion gave the King an opportunity of showing the high regard in which Page and his family were held. It had been planned that the wedding should take place in Westminster Abbey, but the King very courteously offered Miss Page the Royal chapel in St. James's Palace. This was a distinguished compliment, as it was the first time that any marriage, in which both bride and bridegroom were foreigners, had ever been celebrated in this building, which for centuries has been the scene of royal weddings. The special place which his daughter had always held in the Ambassador's affections is apparent in the many letters that now followed her to her new home in the United States. The unique use Page made of the initials of his daughter's name was characteristic.

To Mrs. Charles G. Loring

London, September 1, 1915.

My dear K. A. P-tain:

Here's a joke on your mother and Frank: We three (and Smith) went up to Broadway in the car,

to stay there a little while and then to go on into Wales, etc. The hotel is an old curiosity shop; you sit on Elizabethan chairs by a Queen Anne table, on a drunken floor, and look at the pewter platters on the wall or do your best to look at them, for the ancient windows admit hardly any light. "Oh! lovely," cries Frank; and then he and your mother make out in the half-darkness a perfectly wonderful copper mug on the mantelpiece; and you go out and come in the ramshackle door (stooping every time) after you've felt all about for the rusty old iron latch, and then you step down two steps (or fall), presently to step up two more. Well, for dinner we had six kinds of meat and two meat pies and potatoes and currants! My dinner was a potato. I'm old and infirm and I have many ailments, but I'm not so bad off as to be able to live on a potato a day. And since we were having a vacation, I didn't see the point. So I came home where I have seven courses for dinner, all good; and Mrs. Leggett took my place in the car. That carnivorous company went on. They've got to eat six kinds of meat and two meat pies and—currants! I haven't. Your mother calls me up on the 'phone every morning—me, who am living here in luxury, seven courses at every dinner—and asks anxiously, "And how *are* you, dear?" I answer: "Prime, and how are *you?*" We are all enjoying ourselves, you see, and I don't have to eat six kinds of meat and two meat pies and—currants! They do; and may Heaven save 'em and get 'em home safe!

It's lovely in London now—fine, shining days and showers at night and Ranelagh beautiful, and few people here; but I don't deny its loneliness—somewhat. Yet sleep is good, and easy and long. I have

neither an ocean voyage nor six kinds of meat and two meat pies and currants. I congratulate myself and write to you and mother.

You'll land to-morrow or next day—good; I congratulate you. Salute the good land for me and present my respectful compliments to vegetables that have taste and fruit that is not sour—to the sunshine, in fact, and to everything that ripens and sweetens in its glow.

And you're now (when this reaches you) fixing up your home—your *own* home, dear Kitty. Bless your dear life, you left a home here—wasn't it a good and nice one?—left it very lonely for the man who has loved you twenty-four years and been made happy by your presence. But he'll love you twenty-five more and on and on—always. So you haven't lost that—nor can you. And it's very fit and right that you should build your own nest; that adds another happy home, you see. And I'm very sure it will be very happy always. Whatever I can do to make it so, now or ever, you have only to say. But—your mother took your photograph with her and got it out of the bag and put it on the bureau as soon as she went to her room—a photograph taken when you were a little girl.

. . . . . .

I laugh as I think of all your new aunts and cousins looking you over and wondering if you'll fit, and then saying to one another as they go to bed: "She is lovely—isn't she?" I could tell 'em a thing or two if I had a whack at 'em.

And you'll soon have all your pretty things in place in your pretty home, and a lot more that I haven't seen. I'll see 'em all before many years—and you,

too! Tell me, did Chud get you a dinner book? Keep your record of things: you'll enjoy it in later years. And you'll have a nice time this autumn—your new kinsfolk, your new friends and old and Boston and Cambridge. . . .

My love to you and Chud too.

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

The task of being "German Ambassador to Great Britain" was evidently not without its irritations.

To Arthur W. Page

September 15, 1915.

DEAR ARTHUR:

Yesterday was my German day. When the boy came up to my room, I told him I had some official calls to make. "Therefore get out my oldest and worst suit." He looked much confused; and when I got up both my worst and best suits were laid out. Evidently he thought he must have misunderstood me. I asked your mother if she was ready to go down to breakfast. "Yes."—"Well, then I'll leave you." She grunted something and when we both got down she asked: "What *did* you say to me upstairs?" I replied: "I regard the incident as closed." She looked a sort of pitying look at me and a minute or two later asked: "What on earth is the matter with you? Can't you hear at all?" I replied: "No. Therefore let's talk." She gave it up, but looked at me again to make sure I was all there.

I stopped at the barber shop, badly needing a shave. The barber got his brush and razor ready. I said:

"Cut my hair." He didn't talk for a few minutes, evidently engaged in deep thought.

When I got to my office, a case was brought to me of a runaway American who was caught trying to send news to Germany. "Very good," said I, "now let it be made evident that it shall appear therefore that his innocence having been duly established he shall be shot."

"What, sir?"

"That since it must be evident that his guilt is genuine therefore see that he be acquitted and then shot."

Laughlin and Bell and Stabler were seen in an earnest conference in the next room for nearly half an hour.

Shoecraft brought me a letter. "This is the most courteous complaint about the French passport bureau we have yet had. I thought you'd like to see this lady's letter. She says she knows you."

"Do not answer it, then."

He went off and conferred with the others.

Hodson spoke of the dog he sold to Frank. "Yes," said I, "since he was a very nice dog, therefore he was worthless."

"Sir?"

And he went off after looking back at me in a queer way.

The day went on in that fashion. When I came out to go to lunch, the stairs down led upward and I found myself, therefore, stepping out of the roof on to the sidewalk—the house upside down. Smith looked puzzled. "Home, sir?"

"No. Go the other way." After he had driven two or three blocks, I told him to turn again and go the other way—home!

Your mother said almost as soon as I got into the

door—"What *was* the matter with you this morning?"

"Oh, nothing. You forget that I am the German Ambassador."

Now this whole narrative is a lie. Nothing in it occurred. If it were otherwise it wouldn't be German.

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

To the President

London, September 26, 1915.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

The suppression of facts about the military situation is more rigorous than ever since the military facts have become so discouraging. The volume of pretty well authenticated news that I used to hear privately has become sensibly diminished. Rumors that reach me by the back door, in all sorts of indirect ways, are not fewer, but fewer of them are credible. There is great confusion, great fear, very great depression—far greater, I think, than England has felt, certainly since the Napoleonic scare and probably since the threat of the Armada.

Nobody, I think, supposes that England herself will be conquered: confidence in the navy is supreme. But the fear of a practical defeat of the Allies on the continent is become general. Russia may have to pay a huge indemnity, going far to reimburse Germany for the cost of the war; Belgium may be permanently held unless Germany receive an indemnity to evacuate, and her seaports may be held anyhow; the Germans may reach Constantinople before the Allies, and Germany may thus hold, when the war ends, an open way to the East; and France may have to pay a large sum to regain her northern territory now held by the Germans.

These are not the convictions of men here, but they have distinctly become the fears; and many men's minds are beginning to adjust themselves to the possible end of the war, as a draw, with these results. Of course such an end would be a real German victory and—another war as soon as enough men grow up to fight it.

When the more cheerful part of public opinion, especially when any member of the Government, affects to laugh at these fears, the people say: "Well, make known the facts that you base your hope on. Precisely how many men have volunteered? Is the voluntary system a success or has it reached its limit? Precisely what is the situation in the Dardanelles? Are the allied armies strong enough to make a big drive to break through the German line in France? Have they big guns and ammunition enough? What are the facts about the chance in the Dardanelles? What have we done with reference to the Balkan States?"

Thus an angry and ominous political situation is arising. The censorship on war news apparently becomes severer, and the general fear spreads and deepens. The air, of course, becomes heavily charged with such rumors as these: that if the Government continue its policy of secrecy, Lloyd George will resign, seeing no hope of a real victory: that, if he do resign, his resignation will disrupt the Government—cause a sort of earthquake; that the Government will probably fall and Lloyd George will be asked to form another one, since he is, as the public sees it, the most active and efficient man in political life; that, if all the Balkan States fail the Allies, Sir Edward Grey will be reckoned a failure and must resign; and you even now hear talk of Mr. Balfour's succeeding him.

It is impossible to say what basis there is for these and other such rumors, but they show the general very serious depression and dissatisfaction. Of that there is no doubt. Nor is there any doubt about grave differences in the Cabinet about conscription nor of grave fear in the public mind about the action of labor unions in hindering the utmost production of ammunition, nor of the increasing feeling that the Prime Minister doesn't lead the nation. Except Lloyd George and the Chancellor of the Exchequer [1] the Cabinet seems to suffer a sort of paralysis. Lord Kitchener's speech in the House of Lords, explaining the military situation, reads like a series of month-old bulletins and was a great disappointment. Mr. Asquith's corresponding speech in the House seemed to lack complete frankness. The nation feels that it is being kept in the dark, and all the military information that it gets is discouraging. Sir Edward Grey, as philosophic and enduring a man as I know, seems much more depressed than I have ever known him to be; Bryce is very very far from cheerful; Plunkett,[2] whom also you know, is in the dumps—it's hard to find a cheerful or a hopeful man.

. . . . . .

In the meantime our prestige (if that be the right word), in British judgment, is gone. As they regard it, we have permitted the Germans to kill our citizens, to carry on a worldwide underhand propaganda from our country (as well as in it), for which they have made no apology and no reparation but only vague assurances for the future now that their submarine fleet has been almost destroyed. They think that we

[1] The Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna.
[2] Sir Horace Plunkett.

are credulous to the point of simplicity to accept any assurances that Bernstorff may give—in a word, that the peace-at-any-price sentiment so dominates American opinion and the American Government that we will submit to any indignity or insult—that we will learn the Germans' real character when it is too late to save our honor or dignity. There is no doubt of the definiteness or depth of this opinion.

. . . . . .

Their feeling is based on their disappointment at our submitting to what they regard as German dallying with us and to German insults. They believe that, if we had sent Bernstorff home when his government made its unsatisfactory reply to our first *Lusitania* note, Germany would at once have "come down"; opportunist Balkan States would have come to the help of the Allies; Holland and perhaps the Scandinavian States would have got some consideration at Berlin for their losses by torpedoes; that more attention would have been paid by Turkey to our protest against the wholesale massacre of the Armenians; and that a better settlement with Japan about Pacific islands and Pacific influence would have been possible for the English at the end of the war. Since, they argue, nobody is now afraid of the United States, her moral influence is impaired at every capital; and I now frequently hear the opinion that, if the war lasts another year and the Germans get less and less use of the United States as a base of general propaganda in all neutral countries, especially all American countries, they are likely themselves to declare war on us as a mere defiance of the whole world and with the hope of stirring up internal trouble for our government by the activity of the

Germans and the Irish in the United States, which may hinder munitions and food and loans to the Allies.

. . . We are not within hearing of the guns (except the guns that shoot at Zeppelins when they come); but the war crowds itself in on us sensibly more and more. There are more wounded soldiers on the streets and in the parks. More and more families one knows lose their sons, more and more women their husbands. Death is so common that it seems a little thing. Four persons have come to my house to-day (Sunday) in the hope that I may find their missing kinsmen, and two more have appealed to me on the telephone and two more still have sent me notes. Since I began this letter, Mrs. Page insisted on my going out on the edge of the city to see an old friend of many years who has just lost both his sons and whose prospective son-in-law is at home wounded. The first thing he said was: "Tell me, what is America going to do?" As we drove back, we made a call on a household whose nephew is "missing."—"Can't you possibly help us hear definitely about him?"

This sort of thing all day every day must have some effect on any man. Then—yesterday morning gave promise of a calm, clear day. I never know what sensational experience awaits me around the next corner. Then there was put on my desk the first page of a reputable weekly paper which was filled with an open letter to me written by the editor and signed. After the usual description of my multitudinous and delicate duties, I was called on to insist that my government should protest against Zeppelin raids on London because a bomb might kill me! Humor doesn't bubble much now on this side the world, for the censor had forbidden the publication of this open letter lest

it should possibly cause American-German trouble! Then the American correspondents came in to verify a report that a news agency is said to have heard that I was deluged with threatening letters!—More widows, more mothers looking for lost sons! . . .

Once in a while—far less often than if I lived in a sane and normal world—I get a few hours off and go to a lonely golf club. Alas! there is seldom anybody there but now and then a pair of girls and now and then a pair of old fellows who have played golf for a century. Yet back in London in the War Office I hear they indulge in disrespectful hilarity at the poor game I play. Now how do they know? (You'd better look to your score with Grayson: the English have spies in America. A major general in their spy-service department told Mrs. Page that they knew all about Archibald [1] before he got on the ship in New York.)

All this I send you not because it is of the slightest permanent importance (except the English judgment of us) but because it will prove, if you need proof, that the world is gone mad. Everything depends on fighting power and on nothing else. A victory will save the Government. Even distinctly hopeful military news will. And English depression will vanish with a turn of the military tide. If it had been Bernstorff instead of Dumba—*that* would have affected even the English judgment of us. Tyrrell [2] remarked to me—did I write you? "Think of the freaks of sheer, blind Luck; a man of considerable ability like Dumba caught for taking a risk that an idiot would have avoided, and a fool like Bernstorff escaping!" Then he added: "I hope Bernstorff will be left. No

[1] It was Archibald's intercepted baggage that furnished the documents which caused Dumba's dismissal.

[2] Sir William Tyrrell, private secretary to Sir Edward Grey.

other human being could serve the English as well as he is serving them."

So, you see, even in his depression the Englishman has some humor left—e. g., when that old sea dog Lord Fisher heard that Mr. Balfour was to become First Lord of the Admiralty, he cried out: "Damn it! he won't do: Arthur Balfour is too much of a gentleman." So John Bull is now, after all, rather pathetic—depressed as he has not been depressed for at least a hundred years. The nobility and the common man are doing their whole duty, dying on the Bosphorus or in France without a murmur, or facing an insurrection in India; but the labor union man and the commercial class are holding back and hindering a victory. And there is no great national leader.

Sincerely yours,

WALTER H. PAGE.

CHAPTER XII

A PERPLEXED AMBASSADOR

To Edward M. House

London, December 7, 1915.

My dear House:

I hear you are stroking down the Tammany tiger —an easier job than I have with the British lion. You can find out exactly who your tiger is, you know the house he lives in, the liquor he drinks, the company he goes with. The British lion isn't so easy to find. At times in English history he has dwelt in Downing Street—not so now. So far as our struggle with him is concerned, he's all over the Kingdom; for he is public opinion. The governing crowd in usual times and on usual subjects can here overrun public opinion—can make it, turn it, down it, dodge it. But it isn't so now—as it affects us. Every mother's son of 'em has made up his mind that Germany must and shall be starved out, and even Sir Edward's scalp isn't safe when they suspect that he wishes to be lenient in that matter. They keep trying to drive him out, on two counts: (1) he lets goods out of Germany for the United States "and thereby handicaps the fleet"; and (2) he failed in the Balkans. Sir Edward is too much of a gentleman for this business of rough-riding over all neutral rights and for bribing those Balkan bandits.

I went to see him to-day about the *Hocking,* etc. He asked me: "Do *you know* that the ships of this line are really owned, in good faith, by Americans?"

"I'll answer your question," said I, "if I may then ask you one. No, I don't know of my own knowledge. Now, *do you know* that they are *not* owned by Americans?"

He had to confess that he, of his own knowledge, didn't know.

"Then," I said, "for the relief of us both, I pray you hurry up your prize court."

When we'd got done quarreling about ships and I started to go, he asked me how I liked Wordsworth's war poems. "The best of all war poems," said he, "because they don't glorify war but have to do with its philosophy." Then he told me that some friend of his had just got out a little volume of these war poems selected from Wordsworth; "and I'm going to send you a copy."

"Just in time," said I, "for I have a copy of 'The Life and Letters of John Hay' [1] that I'm sending to you."

He's coming to dine with me in a night or two: he'll do anything but discuss our Note with me. And he's the only member of the Government who, I think, would like to meet our views; and he can't. To use the language of Lowell about the campaign of Governor Kent—these British are hell-bent on starving the Germans out, and neutrals have mighty few rights till that job's done.

The worst of it is that the job won't be done for a very long time. I've been making a sort of systematic round of the Cabinet to see what these fellows think about things in general at this stage of the game. Bonar Law (the Colonies) tells me that the news from the Balkans is worse than the public or the newspapers

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[1] By William Roscoe Thayer, published in 1915.

know, and that still worse news will come. Germany will have it all her own way in that quarter.

"And take Egypt and the canal?"

"I didn't say *that*," he replied. But he showed that he fears even that.

. . . Christmas—that's the thing now. Christmas! What bloody irony it is on this side the world! Still there will be many pleasant and touching things done. An Englishman came in to see me the other day and asked if I'd send $1,000 to Gerard [1] to use in making the English prisoners in Germany as happy as possible on Christmas Day—only I must never tell anybody who did it. A lady came on the same errand—for the British prisoners in Turkey, and with a less but still a generous sum. The heroism, the generosity, the endurance and self-restraint and courtesy of these people would melt a pyramid to tears. Of course there are yellow dogs among 'em, here and there; but the genuine, thoroughbred English man or woman is the real thing—one of the realest things in this world. So polite are they that not a single English person has yet mentioned our Note to me—not one.

But everyone I've met for two days has mentioned the sending of Von Papen and Boy-Ed [2] home—not that they expect us to get into the war, but because they regard this action as maintaining our self-respect.

Nor do they neglect other things because of the war. I went to the annual dinner of the Scottish Corporation the other night—an organization which for 251 years has looked after Scotchmen stranded in London; and they collected £20,000 then and there.

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[1] James W. Gerard, American Ambassador to Germany, and, as such, in charge of British interests in Germany.

[2] The German military and naval attachés, whose persistent and outrageous violation of American laws led to their dismissal by President Wilson.

There's a good deal of Christmas in 'em yet. One fellow in a little patriotic speech said that the Government is spending twenty-five million dollars a day to whip the Germans.—"Cheap work, very cheap work. We can spend twice that if necessary. Why, gentlemen, we haven't exhausted our pocket change yet."

Somehow I keep getting away from Christmas. It doesn't stay put. It'll be a memorable one here for its sorrows and for its grim determination—an empty chair at every English table. But nowhere in the world will it be different except in the small neutral states here and in the lands on your side the world.

How many Christmases the war may last, nobody's wise enough to know. That depends absolutely on Germany. The Allies announced their terms ten months ago, and nothing has yet happened to make them change them. That would leave the Germans with Germany and a secure peace—no obliteration or any other wild nonsense, but only a secure peace. Let 'em go back home, pay for the damage they've done, and then stay there. I do hope that the actual fighting will be ended by Christmas of next year. Of course it *may* end with dramatic suddenness at any time, this being the only way, perhaps, for the Kaiser to save his throne. Or it may go on for two or three years. My guess is that it'll end next year—a guess subject to revision, of course, by events that can't be foreseen.

. . . . . .

And I see the most interesting work in the world cut out for me for the next twenty-five or thirty years —to get such courtesy into our dealings with these our kinsmen here, public and private—as will cause them

to follow us in all the developments of democracy and —in keeping the peace of the world secure. I can't impress it on you strongly enough that the English-speaking folk have got to set the pace and keep this world in order. Nobody else is equal to the job. In all our dealings with the British, public and private, we allow it to be assumed that *they* lead: they don't. *We* lead. They'll follow, if we do really lead and are courteous to them. If we hold back, the Irishman rears up and says we are surrendering to the English! Suppose we go ahead and the English surrender to us, what can your Irishman do then? Or your German? The British Navy is a pretty good sort of dog to have to trot under your wagon. If we are willing to have ten years of thoughtful good manners, I tell you Jellicoe will eat out of your hand.

Therefore, cheer up! It's not at all improbable that Ford [1] and his cargo of cranks, if they get across the ocean, may strike a German mine in the North Sea. Then they'll die happy, as martyrs; and the rest of us will live happy, and it'll be a Merry Christmas for everybody.

Our love to Mrs. House.

Always heartily yours,
W. H. P.

To Frank N. Doubleday and Others

London, Christmas, 1915.

DEAR D. P. & Co.

. . . Now, since we're talking about the war, let me deliver my opinion and leave the subject. They're

[1] Mr. Henry Ford at this time was getting together his famous peace ship, which was to sail to Europe "to get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas."

killing one another all right; you needn't have any doubt about that—so many thousand every day, whether there's any battle or not. When there's "nothing to report" from France, that means the regular 5,000 casualties that happen every day. There isn't any way of getting rid of men that has been forgotten or neglected. Women and children, too, of course, starve in Serbia and Poland and are massacred in Turkey. England, though she has by very much the largest army she ever had, has the smallest of all the big armies and yet I don't know a family that had men of fighting age which hasn't lost one or more members. And the worst is to come. But you never hear a complaint. Poor Mr. Dent,[1] for instance (two sons dead), says: "It's all right. England must be saved."

And this Kingdom alone, as you know, is spending twenty-five million dollars a day. The big loan placed in the United States [2] would last but twenty days! If this pace of slaughter and of spending go on long enough, there won't be any men or any money left on this side the world. Yet there will be both left, of course; for somehow things never quite go to the ultimate smash that seems to come. Read the history of the French Revolution. How did the French nation survive?

It will go on, unless some unexpected dramatic military event end it, for something like another year at least—many say for two years more, and some, three years more. It'll stop, of course, whenever Germany will propose terms that the Allies can consider—or something near such terms; and it won't stop before.

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[1] J. M. Dent, the London publisher.
[2] $500,000,000.

By blockade pressure and by fighting, the Allies are gradually wearing the Germans out. We can see here the gradual pressure of events in that direction. My guess is that they won't go into a third winter.

Well, dear gentlemen, however you may feel about it, that's enough for me. My day—every day—is divided into these parts: (1) two to three hours listening to Americans or their agents here whose cargoes are stopped, to sorrowing American parents whose boys have run away and gone into the English Army, to nurses and doctors and shell-makers who wish to go to France, to bereaved English men and women whose sons are "missing": can I have them found in Germany? (2) to answering letters about these same cheerful subjects; (3) to going over cases and documents prepared about all these sorts of troubles and forty other sorts, by the eight or ten secretaries of the Embassy, and a conference with every one of them; (4) the reading of two books of telegrams, one incoming, the other outgoing, and the preparation of a lot of answers; (5) going to the Foreign Office, not every day but often, to discuss more troubles there; (6) home to dinner at 8 o'clock—at home or somewhere else, and there is more talk about the war or about the political troubles. That for a regular daily routine for pretty nearly a year and a half!

As I say, if anybody is keeping the war up for my entertainment, he now has my permission to stop. No time to read, no time to write, little time to think, little or no time to see the people you most wish to see, I often don't know the day of the week or of the month: it's a sort of life in the trenches, without the immediate physical danger. Then I have my cabinet meetings, my financial reports (money we spend for four governments: I had till recently about a million

dollars subject to my check); then the commission for the relief of Belgium; then the Ambassadors and Ministers of the other neutral states—our task is worse than war!

Well, praise God for sleep. I get from seven to nine hours a night, unbroken; and I don't take Armageddon to bed with me.

I don't mind telling *you* (nobody else) that the more I see just how great statesmen work and manage great governments—the more I see of them at close range—whether in Washington or London or Berlin or Vienna or Constantinople (for these are *my* Capitals), the more I admire the methods of the Long Island farmers. Boys, I swear I could take our crowd and do a better job than many of these great men do. I have to spend a lot of time to correct their moves before the other fellow finds out the mistake. For instance I know I spent $2,000 in telegrams before I could make the German Government understand the British military age, and the British Government understand the German military age, for exchanging prisoners who had lost two legs or arms or both eyes; and I've had to send a man to Berlin to get a financial report from one man on one floor of a building there and to take it to another man on the floor above.

Just yesterday I was reminded that I had made eighteen requests for the same information of the British Government, when the nineteenth request for it came from Washington; and I have now telegraphed that same thing nineteen times since the war began. Of course everybody's worked to death. But something else ails a lot of 'em all the way from Constantinople to London. Leaving out common gutter lying (and there's much of it) the sheer stupidity of governments is amazing. They are all so human, so mighty

human! I wouldn't be a government for any earthly consideration. I'd rather be a brindled dog and trot under the wagon.

But it has been an inexpressibly interesting experience to find all this out for myself. There's a sort of weary satisfaction in feeling that you've seen too much of them to be fooled by 'em any more. And, although most men now engaged in this game of government are mere common mortals with most of the common mortal weaknesses, now and then a really big man does stumble into the business. I have my doubts whether a really big man ever deliberately goes into it. And most of the men who the crowd for the moment thinks are big men don't really turn out so. It's a game like bull fighting. The bull is likely to kill you—pretty sure to do so if you keep at the business long enough; but in the meantime you have some exciting experiences and the applause of the audience. When you get killed, they forget you—immediately.

There are two rather big men in this government, and you wouldn't guess in three rounds who they are. But in general the war hasn't so far developed very big men in any country. Else we are yet too close to them to recognize their greatness. Joffre seems to have great stuff in him; and (I assure you) you needn't ever laugh at a Frenchman again. They are a great people. As for the British, there was never such a race. It's odd—I hear that it happens just now to be the fashion in the United States to say that the British are not doing their share. There never was a greater slander. They absolutely hold the Seven Seas. They have caught about seventy submarines and some of them are now destroying German ships in the Baltic Sea. They've sent to France by several times the

largest army that any people ever sent over the sea. They are financing most of their allies and they have turned this whole island into gun and shell factories. They made a great mistake at the Dardanelles and they are slower than death to change their set methods. But no family in the land, from charcoal burners to dukes, hesitates one moment to send its sons into the army. When the news comes of their death, they never whimper.

When you come right down to hard facts, the courage and the endurance of the British and the French excel anything ever before seen on this planet. All the old stories of bravery from Homer down are outdone every day by these people. I see these British at close range, full-dress and undress; and I've got to know a lot of 'em as well as we can ever come to know anybody after we get grown. There is simply no end to the silly sides of their character. But, when the real trial comes, they don't flinch; and (except the thoroughbred American) there are no such men in the world.

A seven-foot Kansas lawyer (Kansas all over him) came to see me yesterday. He came here a month ago on some legal business. He told me yesterday that he had always despised Englishmen. He's seen a few with stud-horse clothes and white spats and monocles on who had gone through Kansas to shoot in the Rocky Mountains. He couldn't understand 'em and he didn't like 'em. "So infernally uppish," said he.

"Well, what do you think of 'em now?"

"The very best people in the world," said he. I think he has a notion of enlisting!

. . . . . .

To come back to the war. (We always do.) Since I wrote the first part of this letter, I spent an evening with a member of the Cabinet and he told me so much bad military news, which they prevent the papers from publishing or even hearing, that to-night I almost share this man's opinion that the war will last till 1918. That isn't impossible. If that happens the offer that I heard a noble old buck make to a group of ladies the other night may be accepted. This old codger is about seventy-five, ruddy and saucy yet. "My dear ladies," said he, "if the war goes on and on we shall have no young men left. A double duty will fall on the old fellows. I shall be ready, when the need comes, to take four extra wives, and I daresay there are others of my generation who are as patriotic as I am."

All of which is only my long-winded, round-about diplomatic way of wishing you every one and every one of yours and all the folk in the office, their assigns, superiors, dependents, companions in labor—all, everyone and sundry, the happiest of Christmases; and when you take stock of your manifold blessings, don't forget to be thankful for the Atlantic Ocean. That's the best asset of safety that we have.

Affectionately yours,
W. H. P.

To Mrs. Charles G. Loring

6 Grosvenor Square,
London, December 7, 1915.

DEAR KITTY:

This is my Christmas letter to you and Chud—a poor thing, but the best I have to give you. At least

it carries my love, dear, and my wishes that every Christmas under your own roof will be happier than the preceding one. Since your starting point is on the high level of your first Christmas in your own home—that's a good wish: isn't it?

I'm beginning to think a good deal of your mother and me. Here we are left alone by every one of you —in a foreign land; and, contrary to all predictions that any of you would have made about us four or five years ago, we're faring pretty well, thank you, and not on the edge of dying of loneliness at all. I tell you, I think we're pretty brave and hardy.

We're even capable of becoming cocky and saucy to every one of you. Be careful, then.

You see if you have a war to live with you don't necessarily need children: you'll have strife enough without 'em. We'll console ourselves with such reflections as these.

And the truth is—at least about me—that there isn't time to think of what you haven't got. Of course, I'm working as always, to soften the relations between these two governments. So far, in spite of the pretty deep latent feeling on both sides—far worse than it ought to be and far worse than I wish it were —I'm working all the time to keep things as smooth as possible. Happily, nobody can prove it, but I believe it, that there is now and there has been all along more danger of a serious misunderstanding than anybody has known. The Germans have, of course, worked in 1000 ways to cause misunderstanding between England and the United States.

Then, of course, there has been constant danger in the English bull-headed insularity which sees nothing but the Englishman's immediate need, and in the English slowness. Add to these causes the American ig-

norance of war and of European conditions. It has been a God's mercy for us that we have so far had a man like Sir Edward Grey in his post. And in my post, while there might well have been a better man, this much at least has been lucky—that I do have a consciousness of English history and of our common origin and some sense of the inevitable destiny of the great English-speaking race—so that, when we have come to sharp corners in the road, I have known that whatever happen we must travel in the right general direction—have known that no temporary difference must be allowed to assume a permanent quality.

I have thought several times that we had passed the worst possible place, and then a still worse one would appear. It does look now as if we had faced most of the worst difficulties that can come, but I am not sure what Congress may do or provoke. If we outlast Congress, we shall be safe. Now to come through this enormous war even with no worse feeling than already exists between the two countries—that'll be a big thing to have done. But it's work like the work of the English fleet. Nobody can prove that Jellicoe has been a great admiral. Yet the fleet has done the whole job more successfully than if it had had sea fights and lost a part of their ships.

Your mother and I are hearing much interesting political talk. We dined last night with Mr. Bonar Law. Sir Edward Carson was there. To-day we lunched with Lady P.—the other side, you see. There are fundamental differences continually arising. They thought a few weeks ago that they had the Prime Minister's scalp. He proved too nimble for them. Now one person after another says to you: "Kitchener doesn't deserve the reverence the people give him." More and more folks say he's hard to work

with—is domineering and selfish. Nobody seems really to know him; and there are some signs that there may be a row about him.

We've heard nothing from Harold in quite a little while. We have, you know, three of our footmen in the war. Allen was wounded at Loos—a flesh, bullet wound. He's about well now and is soon going back. Leslie is in the trenches and a postal card came from him the other day. The third one, Philip, is a prisoner in Germany. Your mother sent him a lot of things, but we've never heard whether he received them or not. . . .

I keep forgetting Xmas, Kitty, and this is my Xmas letter. You needn't put it in your stocking, but you'd really better burn it up. It would be the ruination of the world if my frank comments got loose. It's for you and Chud only. You may fill your stocking full of the best wishes you ever received—enough to fill the polar bear skin. And I send you both my love.

W. H. P.

To Frank N. Doubleday and Others

Royal Bath and East Cliff Hotel,
Bournemouth, May 29, 1916.

DEAR D. P. & CO.:

I always have it in mind to write you letters; but there's no chance in my trenches in London; and, since I have not been out of London for nearly two years—since the war began—only an occasional half day and a night—till now—naturally I've concocted no letter. I've been down here a week—a week of sunshine, praise God—and people are not after me every ten minutes, or governments either; and my most ad-

mirable and efficient staff (now grown to one hundred people) permit few letters and telegrams to reach me. There never was a little rest more grateful. The quiet sea out my window shows no sign of crawling submarines; and, in general, it's as quiet and peaceful here as in Garden City itself.

I'm on the home stretch now in all my thoughts and plans. Three of my four years are gone, and the fourth will quickly pass. That's not only the limit of my leave, but it's quite enough for me. I shouldn't care to live through another such experience, if the chance should ever come to me. It has changed my whole life and my whole outlook on life; and, perhaps, you'd like to hear some impressions that it has made upon me.

The first impression—perhaps the strongest—is a loss of permanent interest in Europe, especially all Europe outside of this kingdom. I have never had the illusion that Europe had many things that we needed to learn. The chief lesson that it has had, in my judgment, is the lesson of the art of living—the comforts and the courtesies of life, the refinements and the pleasures of conversation and of courteous conduct. The upper classes have this to teach us; and we need and can learn much from them. But this seems to me all—or practically all. What we care most for are individual character, individual development, and a fair chance for every human being. Character, of course, the English have—immense character, colossal character. But even they have not the dimmest conception of what we mean by a fair chance for every human being—not the slightest. In one thousand years they *may* learn it from us. Now on the continent, the only important nation that has any character worth mentioning is the French. Of

course the little nations—some of them—have character, such as Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, etc. But these are all. The others are simply rotten. In giving a free chance to every human creature, we've nothing to learn from anybody. In character, I bow down to the English and Scotch; I respect the Frenchman highly and admire his good taste. But, for our needs and from our point of view, the English can teach us only two great lessons—character and the art of living (if you are rich).

The idea that we were brought up on, therefore, that Europe is the home of civilization in general—nonsense! It's a periodical slaughter pen, with all the vices that this implies. I'd as lief live in the Chicago stockyards. There they kill beeves and pigs. Here they kill men and (incidentally) women and children. I should no more think of encouraging or being happy over a child of mine becoming a European of any nation than I should be happy over his fall from grace in any other way.

Our form of government and our scheme of society —God knows they need improving—are yet so immeasurably superior, as systems, to anything on this side the world that no comparison need be made.

My first strong impression, then, is not that Europe is "effete"—that isn't it. It is medieval—far back toward the Dark Ages, much of it yet uncivilized, held back by *inertia* when not held back by worse things. The caste system is a constant burden almost as heavy as war itself and often quite as cruel.

The next impression I have is, that, during the thousand years that will be required for Europe to attain real (modern) civilization, wars will come as wars have always come in the past. The different countries and peoples and governments will not and

cannot learn the lesson of federation and coöperation so long as a large mass of their people have no voice and no knowledge except of their particular business. Compare the miles of railway in proportion to population with the same proportion in the United States—or the telephones, or the use of the mails, or of bank checks; or make any other practical measure you like. Every time, you'll come back to the discouraging fact that the masses in Europe are driven as cattle. So long as this is true, of course, they'll be driven periodically into wars. So many countries, so many races, so many languages all within so small an area as Europe positively invite deadly differences. If railroads had been invented before each people had developed its own separate language, Europe could somehow have been coördinated, linked up, federated, made to look at life somewhat in the same way. As it is, wars will be bred here periodically for about another thousand years. The devil of this state of things is that they may not always be able to keep their wars at home.

For me, then, except England and the smaller exceptions that I have mentioned, Europe will cut no big figure in my life. In all the humanities, we are a thousand years ahead of any people here. So also in the adaptabilities and the conveniences of life, in its versatilities and in its enjoyments. Most folk are stolid and sad or dull on this side of the world. Else how could they take their kings and silly ceremonies seriously?

Now to more immediate and definite impressions. I have for a year had the conviction that we ought to get into the war—into the economic war—for the following among many reasons.

1. That's the only way to shorten it. We could cause Germany's credit (such as she has) instantly to collapse, and we could hasten her hard times at home which would induce a surrender.

2. That's the only way we can have any real or important influence in adjusting whatever arrangements can be made to secure peace.

3. That's the best way we can inspire complete respect for us in the minds of other nations and thereby, perhaps, save ourselves from some wars in the future.

4. That's the best way we can assert our own character—our Americanism, and forever get rid of all kinds of hyphens.

5. That's the only way we shall ever get a real and sensible preparedness, which will be of enormous educational value even if no military use should ever be made of our preparation.

6. That's the only way American consciousness will ever get back to the self-sacrificing and patriotic point of view of the Fathers of the Republic.

7. That's the best way to emancipate ourselves from cranks.

8. That's the only way we'll ever awaken in our whole people a foreign consciousness that will enable us to assert our natural influence in the world—political, financial, social, commercial—the best way to make the rest of the world our customers and friends and followers.

All the foregoing I have fired at the Great White Chief for a year by telegraph and by mail; and I have never fired it anywhere else till now. Be very quiet, then.

No man with whom I have talked or whose writings

I have read seems to me to have an adequate conception of the colossal changes that the war is bringing and will bring. Of course, I do not mean to imply that I have any adequate conception. Nobody can yet grasp it. The loss of (say) ten million men from production of work or wares or children; what a changed world that fact alone will make! The presence in all Europe of (perhaps) fifteen or twenty million more women than men will upset the whole balance of society as regards the sexes. The loss of most of the accumulated capital of Europe and the vast burdens of debt for the future to pay will change the financial relations of the whole world. From these two great losses—men and money—God knows the many kinds of changes that will come. Women are doing and will continue to do many kinds of work hitherto done by men.

. . . . . .

Out of it all, one conviction and one purpose grows and becomes clearer. The world isn't yet half-organized. In the United States we've lived in a good deal of a fool's paradise. The world isn't half so safe a place as we supposed. Until steamships and telegraphs brought the nations all close together, of course we could enjoy our isolation. We can't do so any longer. One mad fool in Berlin has turned the whole earth topsy-turvy. We'd forgotten what our forefathers learned—the deadly dangers of real monarchs and of castes and classes. There are a lot of 'em left in the world yet. We've grown rich and—weak; we've let cranks and old women shape our ideas. We've let our politicians remain provincial and ignorant.

And believe me, dear D. P. & Co. with affectionate greeting to every one of you and to every one of yours, collectively and singly,

Yours heartily,

W. H. P.

CHAPTER XIII

PEACE WITHOUT VICTORY

IN July Page received a cablegram summoning him to Washington. This message did not explain why his presence was desired, nor on this point was Page ever definitely enlightened, though there were more or less vague statements that a "change of atmosphere" might better enable the Ambassador to understand the problems which were then engrossing the State Department.

The President had now only a single aim in view. From the date of the so-called *Sussex* "pledge," May 4, 1916, until the resumption of submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, Mr. Wilson devoted all his energies to bringing the warring powers together and establishing peace. Mr. Wilson was bent on keeping the United States out of the war; he knew that there was only one certain way of preserving peace in this country, and that was by bringing the war itself to an end. "An early peace is all that can prevent the Germans from driving us at last into the war," Page wrote at about this time; and this single sentence gives the key to the President's activities for the succeeding nine months. The negotiations over the *Sussex* had taught Mr. Wilson this truth. He understood that the pledge which the German Government had made was only a conditional one; that the submarine campaign had been suspended only for the purpose of giving the United States a breathing spell during which

it could persuade Great Britain and France to make peace.

This then was clearly the "atmosphere" which prevailed in Washington at the time that Page was summoned home.

Mr. Page's memorandum of his visit to Washington in August, 1916

The President was very courteous to me, in his way. He invited me to luncheon the day after I arrived. Present: the President, Mrs. Wilson, Miss Bones, Tom Bolling, his brother-in-law, and I. The conversation was general and in the main jocular. Not a word about England, not a word about a foreign policy or foreign relations.

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Two weeks passed. Another invitation to lunch. Sharp, the Ambassador to France, had arrived. He, too, was invited. Present: the President, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Wallace, the Misses Smith of New Orleans, Miss Bones, Sharp, and I. Not one word about foreign affairs.

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[The President] had no idea of talking with me now, if ever. Not at lunch nor after did he suggest a conversation about American-British affairs or say anything about my seeing him again.

A member of his cabinet told me that Mr. Wilson had shown confidence in him, given him a wide range of action in his own department and that he relies on his judgment. This cabinet member of course attends

the routine state dinners and receptions, as a matter of required duty. But as for any social recognition of his existence—he had never received a hint or nod. Nor does any member of the Cabinet (except, no doubt, Mr. McAdoo, his son-in-law). There is no social sense nor reason in this. In fact, it works to a very decided disadvantage to the President and to the Nation.

By the way, that a notable man in our educational life could form such a habit does not speak well for our educational life.

What an unspeakably lamentable loss of opportunity! This is the more remarkable and lamentable because the President is a charming personality, an uncommonly good talker, a man who could easily make personal friends of all the world. He does his own thinking, untouched by other men's ideas. He receives nothing from the outside. His domestic life is spent with his own, nobody else, except House occasionally. His contact with his own cabinet is a business man's contact with his business associates and kind—at his office.

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The influence of this lone-hand way of playing the game extends very far. The members of the Cabinet do not seem to have the habit of frankness with one another. Each lives and works in a watertight compartment. I sat at luncheon (at a hotel) with Lansing, Secretary of State; Lane, Secretary of the Interior; Gregory, Attorney-General; Baker, Secretary of War; Daniels, Secretary of the Navy; and Sharp, Ambassador to France; and all the talk was jocular or semi-jocular, and personal—mere cheap chaff. Not

a question was asked either of the Ambassador to France or of the Ambassador to Great Britain about the war or about our foreign relations. The war wasn't mentioned. Sharp and I might have come from Bungtown and Jonesville and not from France and England. We were not encouraged to talk—the local personal joke held the time and conversation. This astounding fact must be the result of this lone-hand, watertight compartment method and—of the neutrality suppression of men. . . .

I can see it in no other way but this: the President suppressed free thought and free speech when he insisted upon personal neutrality. He held back the deliberate and spontaneous thought and speech of the people except the pro-Germans, who saw their chance and improved it! The mass of the American people found themselves forbidden to think or talk, and this forbidding had a sufficient effect to make them take refuge in indifference. It's the President's job. He's our leader. He'll attend to this matter. We must not embarrass him. On this easy cushion of non-responsibility the great masses fell back at their intellectual and moral ease—softened, isolated, lulled.

That wasn't leadership in a democracy. Right here is the President's vast failure. From it there is now no escape unless the Germans commit more submarine crimes. They have kept the United States for their own exploiting after the war. They have thus had a real triumph of us.

I have talked in Washington with few men who showed any clear conception of the difference between the Germans and the British. To the minds of these people and high Government officials, German and

English are alike foreign nations who are now foolishly engaged in war. Two of the men who look upon the thing differently are Houston [1] and Logan Waller Page.[2] In fact, there is no realization of the war in Washington. Secretary Houston has a proper perspective of the situation. He would have done precisely what I recommended—paved the way for claims and let the English take their course. "International law" is no strict code and it's all shot to pieces anyhow.

The Secretary [of State] betrayed not the slightest curiosity about our relations with Great Britain. I saw him several times—(1) in his office; (2) at his house; (3) at the French Ambassador's; (4) at Wallace's; (5) at his office; (6) at Crozier's [3]—this during my first stay in Washington. The only remark he made was that I'd find a different atmosphere in Washington from the atmosphere in London. Truly. All the rest of his talk was about "cases." Would I see Senator Owen? Would I see Congressman Sherley? Would I take up this "case" and that? His mind ran on "cases."

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I proposed to Baker and Daniels that they send a general and an admiral as attachés to London. They both agreed. Daniels later told me that Baker mentioned it to the President and he "stepped on the suggestion with both feet." I did not bring it up. In the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, both General McClellan (or Sheridan?) and General Forsythe

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[1] Secretary of Agriculture.

[2] In charge of government road building, a distant relative of the Ambassador.

[3] Major General William Crozier, U. S. A., Chief of Ordnance.

were sent to the German army. Our military ideas have shrunk since then!

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There is not a man in our State Department or in our Government who has ever met any prominent statesmen in any European government—except the third Assistant Secretary of State, who has no authority in forming policies; there is not a man who knows the atmosphere of Europe. Yet when I proposed that one of the under secretaries should go to England on a visit of a few weeks for observation, the objection arose that such a visit would not be "neutral."

The extraordinary feature of this experience was that Page had been officially summoned home, presumably to discuss the European situation, and that neither the President nor the State Department apparently had the slightest interest in his visit.

"The President," Page wrote to Mr. Laughlin, "dominates the whole show in a most extraordinary way. The men about him (and he sees them only on 'business') are very nearly all very, very small fry, or worse—the narrowest twopenny lot I've ever come across. He has no real companions. Nobody talks to him freely and frankly. I've never known quite such a condition in American life." Perhaps the President had no desire to discuss inconvenient matters with his Ambassador to Great Britain, but Page was certainly determined to have an interview with the President. "I'm not going back to London," he wrote Mr. Laughlin, "till the President has said something to me or at least till I have said something to him. I am now going down to Garden City and New York till the President send for me; or, if he do not

send for me, I'm going to his house and sit on his front steps till he comes out!" Page had brought from England one of the medals which the Germans had struck in honor of the *Lusitania* sinking, and one reason why he particularly wished to see the President alone was to show him this memento.

Another reason was that in early September Page had received important news from London concerning the move which Germany was making for peace and the attitude of Great Britain in this matter. The several plans which Germany had had under consideration had now taken the form of a definite determination to ask for an armistice before winter set in.

Page waited five weeks before he succeeded in obtaining his interview with Mr. Wilson.

To the President

The New Willard, Washington, D. C.
Thursday, September 21, 1916.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

. . . . . .

The situation between our government and Great Britain seems to me most alarming; and (let me add) easily removable, if I can get the ear of anybody in authority. But I find here only an atmosphere of suspicion—unwarranted by facts and easily dissipated by straight and simple friendly methods. I am sure of this.

I have, besides, a most important and confidential message for you from the British Government which they prefer should be orally delivered.

And I have written out a statement of my own study

of the situation and of certain proposals which, I think, if they commend themselves to you, will go far to remove this dangerous tension. I hope to go over them with you at your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER H. PAGE.

Page's urgent letter to Mr. Wilson brought a telegram from Mr. Tumulty inviting the Ambassador to spend the next evening and night with the President at Shadow Lawn, the seaside house on the New Jersey coast in which Mr. Wilson was spending the summer. Mr. Wilson received his old friend with great courtesy and listened quietly and with apparent interest to all that he had to say. The written statement to which Page refers in his letter told the story of Anglo-American relations from the time of the Panama tolls repeal up to the time of Page's visit to Shadow Lawn. The document was an eloquent plea for American co-operation with the Allies—for the dismissal of Bernstorff, for the adoption of a manly attitude toward Germany, and for the vindication of a high type of Americanism.

Page showed the President the *Lusitania* medal, but that did not especially impress him. "The President said to me," wrote Page in reference to this visit, "that when the war began he and all the men he met were in hearty sympathy with the Allies; but that now the sentiment toward England had greatly changed. He saw no one who was not vexed and irritated by the arbitrary English course. That is, I fear, true—that he sees no one but has a complaint. So does the Secretary of State, and the Trade Bureau, and all the rest in Washington. But in Boston, in New York, and in the South, and in Auburn, N. Y., I saw no one

whose sympathy with the Allies had undergone any fundamental change. I saw men who felt vexed at such an act as the blacklist, but that was merely vexation, not a fundamental change of feeling. Of course, there came to see me men who had 'cases.' Now these are the only kind of men, I fear, whom the Government at Washington sees—these and the members of Congress whom the Germans have scared or have 'put up' to scare the Government—who are 'twisting the lion's tail,' in a word."

Page delivered his oral message about the German determination to obtain an armistice. This was to the effect that Great Britain would not grant it. Page intimated that Britain would be offended if the President proposed it.

"If an armistice, no," answered Mr. Wilson. "That's a military matter and is none of my business. But if they propose an armistice looking toward peace —yes, I shall be glad."

The experience was an exceedingly trying one for both men. The discussion showed how far apart were the President and his ambassador on practically every issue connected with the crisis. Naturally the President's reference to the causes of the war—that there were many causes, some of them of long persistence, and that Great Britain's domination of the "earth" was one of them—conflicted with the judgment of a man who attributed the origin of the struggle to German aggression. The President's statement that American sympathy for the Allies had now changed to irritation, and the tolerant attitude toward Germany which Mr. Wilson displayed, affected Page with the profoundest discouragement. The President's intimation that he would advance Germany's request for an armistice, if it looked

toward peace—this in reply to Page's message that Great Britain would not receive such a proposal in a kindly spirit—seemed to lay the basis of further misunderstandings. The interview was a disheartening one for Page.

Many people whom the Ambassador met in the course of this visit still retain memories of his fervor in what had now become with him a sacred cause. With many friends and officials he discussed the European situation almost like a man inspired. The present writer recalls two long conversations with Page at this time: the recollection of his brilliant verbal portraiture, his description of the determination of Englishmen, his admiration for the heroic sacrifice of Englishwomen, remain as about the most vivid memories of a lifetime.

And now the Ambassador had brought this same eloquence to the President's ear at Shadow Lawn. It was in this interview that Page had hoped to show Mr. Wilson the real merits of the situation, and persuade him to adopt the course to which the national honor and safety pointed; he talked long and eloquently, painting the whole European tragedy with that intensity and readiness of utterance and that moral conviction which had so moved all others with whom he had come into contact during this memorable visit to the United States; but Mr. Wilson was utterly cold, utterly unresponsive, interested only in ending the war. The talk lasted for a whole morning; its nature may be assumed from the many letters already printed; but Page's voice, when it attempted to fire the conscience of the President, proved as ineffective as his pen.

However, there was nothing rasping or contentious about the interview. The two men discussed every-

thing with the utmost calmness and without the slightest indications of ill-nature. Both men had in mind their long association, both inevitably recalled the hopes with which they had begun their official relationship three years before, at that time neither having the faintest intimation of the tremendous problems that were to draw them asunder. Mr. Wilson at this meeting did not impress his Ambassador as a perverse character, but as an extremely pathetic one. Page came away with no vexation or anger, but with a real feeling for a much suffering and a much perplexed statesman. The fact that the President's life was so solitary, and that he seemed to be so completely out of touch with men and with the living thoughts of the world, appealed strongly to Page's sympathies. "I think he is the loneliest man I have ever known," Page remarked to his son Frank after coming away from this visit.

Page felt this at the time, for, as he rose to say good-by to the President, he put his hand upon his shoulder. At this Mr. Wilson's eyes filled with tears and he gave Page an affectionate good-by. The two men never met again.

Soon after President Wilson's reëlection, Page sent his resignation to Washington. He believed that his work in London had been finished, that he had done everything in his power to make Mr. Wilson see the situation in its true light and that he had not succeeded.

To the President

London, November 24, 1916.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

We have all known for many years that the rich and populous and organized states in which the big cities

are do not constitute the political United States. But, I confess, I hardly expected so soon to see this fact proclaimed at the ballot box. To me that's the surprise of the election. And your popular majority as well as your clear majority in the Electoral College is a great personal triumph for you. . . .

. . . Now, if you will permit me to say so, from my somewhat distant view (four years make a long period of absence) the big party task is to build up a clearer and more positive foreign policy. We are in the world and we've got to choose what active part we shall play in it—I fear rather quickly. I have the conviction, as you know, that this whole round globe now hangs as a ripe apple for our plucking, if we use the right ladder while the chance lasts. I do not mean that we want or could get the apple for ourselves, but that we can see to it that it is put to proper uses.

What we have to do, in my judgment, is to go back to our political fathers for our clue. If my long-time memory be good, they were sure that their establishment of a great free Republic would soon be imitated by European peoples—that democracies would take the place of autocracies in all so-called civilized countries; for that was the form that the fight took in their day against organized Privilege. But for one reason or another—in our lifetime partly because we chose so completely to isolate ourselves—the democratic idea took root in Europe with disappointing slowness. It is, for instance, now perhaps for the first time, in a thoroughgoing way, within sight in this Kingdom. The dream of the American Fathers, therefore, is not yet come true. They fought against organized Privilege exerted from over the sea. In principle it is the same fight that we have made, in our domestic field,

during recent decades. Now the same fight has come on a far larger scale than men ever dreamed of before.

It isn't, therefore, for merely doctrinal reasons that we are concerned for the spread of democracy nor merely because a democracy is the only scheme of organization yet wrought out that keeps the door of opportunity open and invites all men to their fullest development. But we are interested in it because under no other system can the world be made an even reasonably safe place to live in. For only autocracies wage aggressive wars. Aggressive autocracies, especially military autocracies, must be softened down by peace (and they have never been so softened) or destroyed by war. The All-Highest doctrine of Germany to-day is the same as the Taxation-without-Representation of George III—only more virulent, stronger, and farther-reaching. Only by its end can the German people recover and build up their character and take the permanent place in the world that they—thus changed—will be entitled to. They will either reduce Europe to the vassalage of a military autocracy, which may then overrun the whole world or drench it in blood, or they must through stages of Liberalism work their way toward some approach to a democracy; and there is no doubt which event is impending. The Liberal idea will win in this struggle, and Europe will be out of danger of a general assault on free institutions till some other autocracy which has a military caste try the same Napoleonic game. The defeat of Germany, therefore, will make for the spread of the doctrine of our Fathers and our doctrine yet. . . .

It has seemed to me, looking at the subject only with reference to our country's duty and safety, that

somehow and at some early time our championship of democracy must lead us to redeclare our faith and to show that we believe in our historic creed. Then we may escape falling away from the Liberal forces of the Old World and escape the suspicion of indifference to the great scheme of government which was set up by our fathers' giving their blood for it. I see no other way for us to take the best and biggest opportunity that has ever come to prove true to our faith as well as to secure our own safety and the safety of the world. Only some sort of active and open identification with the Allies can put us in effective protest against the assassins of the Armenians and the assassins of Belgium, Poland, and Serbia, and in friendly attitude to the German people themselves, as distinguished from their military rulers. This is the attitude surely that our fathers would have wished us to take—and would have expected us to take—and that our children will be proud of us for taking; for it is our proper historic attitude, whether looked at from the past or looked back at from the future. There can be no historic approval of neutrality for years, while the world is bleeding to death.

. . . . . .

I write thus freely, Mr. President, because at no time can I write in any other way and because I am sure that all these things can quickly be brought to pass under your strong leadership. The United States would stand, as no other nation has ever stood in the world—predominant and unselfish—on the highest ideals ever reached in human government. It is a vision as splendid as the Holy Grael. Nor have I a shadow of doubt of the eager and faithful follow-

ing of our people, who would thereby reëstablish once for all our weakened nationality. We are made of the stuff that our Fathers were made of.

And I write this now for the additional reason that I am within sight of the early end of my service here. When you called me I answered, not only because you did me great honor and laid a definite patriotic duty on me, but because also of my personal loyalty to you and my pride in helping forward the great principles in which we both believe. But I understood then (and I am sure the subject lay in your mind in the same way) that my service would be for four years at the most. I made all my arrangements, professional and domestic, on this supposition. I shall, therefore, be ready to lay down my work here on March 4th or as soon thereafter as meets your pleasure.

I am more than proud of the confidence that you have shown in me. To it I am indebted for the opportunity I have had to give such public service to my country as I could, as well as for the most profitable experience of my life. A proper and sympathetic understanding between the two English-speaking worlds seems to me the most important duty of far-seeing men in either country. It has taken such a profound hold on me that I shall, in whatever way I can, work for its complete realization as long as I can work for anything.

I am, Mr. President, most faithfully and gratefully yours,

WALTER H. PAGE.

This letter was written at a time when President Wilson was exerting his best energies to bring about peace. The Presidential campaign had caused him to postpone these efforts, for he believed that neither Ger-

many nor Great Britain could take seriously the activities of a President whose own political position was insecure. At the time Page's letter was received, the President was thinking only of a peace based upon a stalemate; it was then his apparent conviction that both sides to the struggle were about equally in the wrong and that a decisive victory of either would not be a good thing for the world. Yet it is interesting to compare this letter of Mr. Page with the famous speech which the President made six months afterward when he asked Congress to declare the existence of a state of war with Germany. Practically all the important reasons which Mr. Wilson then advanced for this declaration are found in Page's letter of the preceding November. That autocracies are a constant menace to world peace, that the United States owes it to its democratic tradition to take up arms against the enemy of free government, that in doing this, it was not making war upon the German people, but upon its imperialistic masters—these were the arguments which Page laid before the President in his letter of resignation, and these were the leading ideas in Mr. Wilson's address of April 2nd. There are even sentences in Page's communication which seem to foreshadow Mr. Wilson's assertion that "The world must be made safe for democracy." This letter in itself sufficiently makes it clear that Page's correspondence, irritating in its later phases as it may have been, strongly influenced Mr. Wilson in his final determination on war.

Page's letter was practically a resignation and therefore called for an immediate reply, but Mr. Wilson did not even acknowledge its receipt. For two months the Ambassador was left in the dark as to the attitude of Washington. Finally, in the latter part of January, 1917, Page wrote urgently to Mr. Lansing,

asking him to bring the matter to the President's attention. On February 5, 1917, Mr. Lansing's reply was received. "The President," he said, "under extreme pressure of the present situation, has been unable to consider your communication in regard to your resignation. He desires me to inform you that he hopes that, at the present time, you will not press to be relieved from service; that he realizes that he is asking you to make a personal sacrifice, but he believes that you will appreciate the importance, in the crisis which has developed, that no change should be made. I hardly need to add my personal hope that you will put aside any thought of resigning your post for the present."

At this time, of course, any idea of retiring was out of the question. The President had dismissed Bernstorff and there was every likelihood that the country would soon be at war. Page would have regarded his retirement at this crisis as little less than the desertion of his post. Moreover, since Mr. Wilson had adopted the policy which the Ambassador had been urging for nearly two years, and had sent Bernstorff home, any logical excuse that may have existed for his resignation existed no longer. Mr. Wilson had now adopted a course which Page could enthusiastically support.

"I am happy to serve here at any sacrifice"—such was his reply to Mr. Lansing—"until after the end of the war, and I am making my arrangements to stay for this period."

The so-called German "peace proposal" began with the statement that the war "had been forced" upon Germany, contained the usual reference to the military might of the Central Powers, and declared that the

Fatherland was fighting for "the honor and liberty of national evolution." It is therefore not surprising that Lord Robert Cecil received it somewhat sardonically, especially as the communication contained no specific proposals, but merely a vague suggestion of "negotiations."

But another spectacular performance now drove the German maneuver out of everybody's mind. That President Wilson resented this German interference with his own plans is well known; he did not drop them, however, but on December 18th, he sent his long-contemplated peace communication to all the warring Powers. His appeal took the form of asking that they state the objects for which they were fighting, the President's belief evidently being that, if they did this, a common meeting ground might possibly be found. The suggestion that the Allied war aims were not public property, despite the fact that British statesmen had been broadly proclaiming them for three years, caused a momentary irritation in England, but this was not a serious matter, especially as the British Cabinet quickly saw that this request gave them a position of advantage over Germany, which had always refused to make public the terms on which it would end the war.

The main substance in this Presidential approach, therefore, would have produced no ill-feeling; as usual, it was a few parenthetical phrases—phrases which were not essential to the main argument—which set the allied countries seething with indignation. The President, this section of his note ran, "takes the liberty of calling attention to the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war, are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the

world. Each side desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small states as secure against aggression and denial in the future as the rights and privileges of the great and powerful states now at war."

It is true that a minute reading indicates that Mr. Wilson was merely quoting, or attempting to paraphrase, the statements of the leaders of both sides, but there is such a thing as quoting with approval, and no explanation could convince the British public that the ruler of the greatest neutral nation had not declared that the Allies and the Central Powers stood morally upon the same level. The popular indignation which this caused in Great Britain was so intense that it alarmed the British authorities. The publication of this note in the British press was withheld for several hours, in order to give the Government an opportunity to control the expression of editorial opinion; otherwise it was feared that this would be so unrestrained in its bitterness that relations with the United States might be imperiled.

The Government took the same precautions with its own press in England. When the note was finally released the Foreign Office explicitly directed the London newspapers to comment with the utmost caution and in no case to question the President's sincerity. Most of them acquiesced in these instructions by maintaining silence. From the first day of the war the British people had declared that President Wilson did not understand the issues at stake; and they now declared that this note confirmed their worst forebodings. The comments of the man-in-the-street were unprintable, but more serious than these was the impression which Mr. Wilson's dubious remarks made upon those Englishmen who had always been espe-

cially friendly to the United States and who had even defended the President in previous crises.

Page's interview with Lord Robert Cecil on December 26th, while the Presidential communication was lying on his desk, discloses the real emotions of Englishmen. To this country and to its peaceful ideals Lord Robert had always been extremely sympathetic, and to Page especially he had never manifested anything but cordiality. Yet it was evident, as Page came into his office this morning, that to Lord Robert, as to every member of the Government, the President's note, with its equivocal phrases, had been a terrible shock. His manner was extremely courteous, as always, but he made no attempt to conceal his feelings. Ordinarily Lord Robert did not wear his emotions on the surface; but he took occasion on this visit to tell Page how greatly the President's communication had grieved him.

"The President," he said, "has seemed to pass judgment on the Allied cause by putting it on the same level as the German. I am deeply hurt."

Page conveyed Mr. Lansing's message that no such inference was justified. But this was not reassuring.

"Moreover," Lord Robert added, "there is one sentence in the note—that in which the President says that the position of neutrals is becoming intolerable—that seems almost a veiled threat."

Page hastened to assure Lord Robert that no threat was intended.

Lord Robert's manner became increasingly serious.

"There is nothing that the American Government or any other human power can do," he remarked slowly and solemnly, "which will bring this war to a close before the Allies have spent their utmost force to secure a victory. A failure to secure such a victory

will leave the world at the mercy of the most arrogant and the bloodiest tyranny that has ever been organized. It is far better to die in an effort to defeat that tyranny than to perish under its success."

If we are to understand the full tragedy of this moment we must remember that, incredible as it now seems, there was a fear in British officialdom that the United States might not only not pursue a course favorable to the Allies, but that it might even throw its support to Germany. The fear, of course, was baseless; any suggestion of such a policy in the United States would have destroyed any official who had brought it forward; but Lord Robert knew and Page knew that there were insidious influences at work at that time, both in the United States and in Great Britain, which looked in this direction. A group of Americans, whom Page used to refer to as "peace spies," were associated with English pacifists, for the purpose of bringing about peace on almost any terms. These "peace spies" had worked out a program all their own. The purpose was to compel Great Britain to accept the German terms for ending the war. Unless she did accept them, then it was intended that the American Government should place an embargo on the shipment of foodstuffs and munitions to the Allies.

There is little question that the United States, by taking such action, could have ended the war almost instantaneously. Should the food of her people and the great quantities of munitions which were coming from this country be suddenly cut off, there is little likelihood that Great Britain could have long survived. The possibility that an embargo might shut out these supplies had hung over the heads of British statesmen ever since the war began; they knew that

the possession of this mighty power made the United States the potential dictator of events; and the fear that it might be used had never ceased to influence their thoughts or their actions.

Startling as was the sensation caused by the President's December note, it was mild compared with that which was now to come. Page naturally sent prompt reports of all these conversations to the President and likewise kept him completely informed as to the state of public feeling, but his best exertions apparently did not immediately affect the Wilson policy. The overwhelming fact is that the President's mind was fixed on a determination to compel the warring powers to make peace and in this way to keep the United States out of the conflict. Even the disturbance caused by his note of December 18th did not make him pause in this peace campaign. To that note the British sent a manly and definite reply, drafted by Mr. Balfour, giving in detail precisely the terms upon which the Allies would compose their differences with the Central Powers. The Germans sent a reply consisting of ten or a dozen lines, which did not give their terms, but merely asked again for a conference.

Events were now moving with the utmost rapidity. On January 9th, a council of German military chieftains was held at Pless; in this it was decided to resume unrestricted submarine warfare. On January 16th the Zimmermann-Mexico telegram was intercepted; this informed Bernstorff, among other things, that this decision had been made. On January 16th, at nine o'clock in the morning, the American Embassy in London began receiving a long cipher despatch from Washington. The preamble announced that the despatch contained a copy of an address which the President proposed to deliver before the Senate

"in a few days." As the speech approached its end, this sentence appeared: "It must be a peace without victory."

The words greatly puzzled the secretary in charge, for they seemed almost meaningless. Suspecting that an error had been made in transmission, the secretary directed the code room to cable Washington for a verification of the cipher groups. Very soon the answer was received; there had been no mistake; the Presidential words were precisely those which had been first received: "Peace without victory." The slips were then taken to Page, who read the document, especially these fateful syllables, with a consternation which he made no effort to conceal. He immediately wrote a cable to President Wilson, telling him of the deplorable effect this sentence would produce and imploring him to cut it out of his speech—with what success the world now knows. On the day the speech was received at the Embassy, about a week before it was delivered in the Senate, Page made the following memorandum:

The President's address to the Senate, which was received to-day (January 16th),[1] shows that he thinks he can play peace-maker. He does not at all understand, (or, if he do, so much the worse for him) that the Entente Powers, especially Great Britain and France, cannot make "peace without victory." If they do, they will become vassals of Germany. In a word, the President does not know the Germans; and he is, unconsciously, under their influence in his thought. His speech plays into their hands.

This address will give great offense in England,

[1] It was delivered and published on January 22nd.

since it puts each side in the war on the same moral level.

I immediately saw the grave danger to our relations with Great Britain by the Peace-without-Victory plan; and I telegraphed the President, venturing to advise him to omit that phrase—with no result.

Afterward Page added this to the above:

Compare this Senate speech with his speech in April calling for war: Just when and how did the President come to see the true nature of the German? What made him change from Peace-Maker to War-Maker? The Zimmermann telegram, or the February U-boat renewal of warfare? Had he been so credulous as to believe the German promise? This promise had been continuously and repeatedly broken.

Or was it the pressure of public opinion, the growing impatience of the people, that pushed him in?

This distressing peace move—utterly out of touch with the facts of the origin of the war or of its conduct or of the mood and necessities of Great Britain—a remote, academic deliverance, while Great Britain and France were fighting for their very lives—made a profoundly dejected feeling; and it made my place and work more uncomfortable than ever. "Peace without victory" brought us to the very depths of European disfavor.

CHAPTER XIV

THE UNITED STATES AT WAR

THE United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on February 3, 1917. The occasion was a memorable one in the American Embassy in London. All day long a nervous and rather weary company had waited in the Ambassador's room for the decisive word from Washington. Mr. and Mrs. Page, Mr. and Mrs. Laughlin, Mr. Shoecraft, the Ambassador's secretary, sat there hour after hour, hardly speaking to one another in their tense excitement, waiting for the news that would inform them that Bernstorff's course had been run and that their country had taken its decision on the side of the Allies. Finally, at nine o'clock in the evening, the front door bell rang. Mr. Shoecraft excitedly left the room; halfway downstairs he met Admiral William Reginald Hall, the head of the British Naval Intelligence, who was hurrying up to the Ambassador. Admiral Hall, as he spied Mr. Shoecraft, stopped abruptly and uttered just two words:

"Thank God!"

Page well understood that the dismissal of Bernstorff at that time meant war with the Central Empires. Had this dismissal taken place in 1915, after the sinking of the *Lusitania,* or in 1916, after the sinking of the *Sussex,* Page believed that a simple break in relations would in itself have brought the war to an early

end. But by February, 1917, things had gone too far. For Germany had now decided to stake everything upon the chance of winning a quick victory with the submarine. Our policy had persuaded the Kaiser's advisers that America would not intervene; and the likelihood of rapidly starving Great Britain was so great—indeed the Germans had reduced the situation to a mathematical calculation of success—that an American declaration of war seemed to Berlin to be a matter of no particular importance. The American Ambassador in London regarded Bernstorff's dismissal much more seriously. It justified the interpretations of events which he had been sending to Mr. Wilson, Colonel House, and others for nearly three years. If Page had been inclined to take satisfaction in the fulfilment of his own prophecies, Germany's disregard of her promises and the American declaration of war would have seemed an ample justification of his course as ambassador.

But Page had little time for such vain communings. "All that water," as he now wrote, "has flowed over the dam." Occasionally his mind would revert to the dreadful period of "neutrality," but in the main his activities, mental and physical, were devoted to the future. A letter addressed to his son Arthur shows how quickly and how sympathetically he was adjusting himself to the new prospect. His mind was now occupied with ships, food, armies, warfare on submarines, and the approaching resettlement of the world. How completely he foresaw the part that the United States must play in the actual waging of hostilities, and to what an extent he himself was responsible for the policies that ultimately prevailed, appears in this letter:

To Arthur W. Page

25 March, 1917, London.

DEAR ARTHUR:

It's very hard, not to say impossible, to write in these swiftly moving days. Anything written to-day is out of date to-morrow—even if it be not wrong to start with. The impression becomes stronger here every day that we shall go into the war "with both feet"—that the people have pushed the President over in spite of his vision of the Great Peacemaker, and that, being pushed over, his idea now will be to show how he led them into a glorious war in defense of democracy. That's my reading of the situation, and I hope I am not wrong. At any rate, ever since the call of Congress for April 2nd, I have been telegraphing tons of information and plans that can be of use only if we go to war. . . . If they do half the things that I recommend we'll be in at the final lickin' big, and will save our souls yet.

There's lots of human nature in this world. A note is now sometimes heard here in undertone (Northcliffe strikes it)—that they don't want the Americans in the war. This means that if we come in just as the Allies finish the job we'll get credit, in part, for the victory, which we did little to win! But that's a minor note. The great mass of people do want us in, quick, hard, and strong—our money and our guns and our ships.

. . . . . .

My mind keeps constantly on the effect of the war and especially of our action on our own country. Of course that is the most important end of the things for us. I hope that—

1. It will break up and tear away our isolation;

2. It will unhorse our cranks and soft-brains;

3. It will make us less promiscuously hospitable to every kind of immigrant;

4. It will reëstablish in our minds and conscience and policy our true historic genesis, background, kindred, and destiny—i. e., kill the Irish and the German influence;

5. It will revive our real manhood—put the molly-coddles in disgrace, as idiots and dandies are:

6. It will make our politics frank and manly by restoring our true nationality;

7. It will make us again a great seafaring people. It is this that has given Great Britain its long lead in the world;

8. Break up our feminized education—make a boy a vigorous animal and make our education rest on a wholesome physical basis;

9. Bring men of a higher type into our political life.

We need waking up and shaking up and invigorating as much as the Germans need taking down.

There is no danger of "militarism" in any harmful sense among any English race or in any democracy.

By George! all these things open an interesting outlook and series of tasks—don't they?

My staff and I are asking everybody what the Americans can best do to help the cause along. The views are not startling, but they are interesting.

Jellicoe: More ships, merchant ships, any kind of ships, and take over the patrol of the American side of the Atlantic and release the British cruisers there.

Balfour: American credits in the United States big enough to keep up the rate of exchange.

Bonar Law: Same thing.

The military men: An expeditionary force, no

matter how small, for the effect of the American Flag in Europe. If one regiment marched through London and Paris and took the Flag to the front, that would be worth the winning of a battle.

If you wish to make a picture of the world as it will be when the war ends, you must conjure up such scenes as these—human bones along the Russian highways where the great retreat took place and all that such a sight denotes; Poland literally starved; Serbia, blasted and burned and starved; Armenia butchered; the horrible tragedy of Gallipoli, where the best soldiers in the world were sacrificed to politicians' policies; Austria and Germany starved and whipped but liberalized—perhaps no king in either country; Belgium—belgiumized; northern France the same and worse; more productive Frenchmen killed in proportion to the population perhaps than any other country will have lost; Great Britain—most of her best men gone or maimed; colossal debts; several Teutonic countries bankrupt; every atrocity conceivable committed somewhere—a hell-swept great continent having endured more suffering in three years than in the preceding three hundred. Then, ten years later, most of this suffering a mere memory; governments reorganized and liberalized; men made more efficient by this strenuous three years' work; the fields got back their bloom, and life going on much as it did before—with this chief difference—some kings have gone and many privileges have been abolished. The lessons are two—(1) that no government can successfully set out and conquer the world; and (2) that the hold that privilege-holders acquire costs more to dislodge than anyone could ever have guessed. That's the sum of it.

Kings and privilege-mongers, of course, have held the parts of the world separate from one another. They fatten on provincialism, which is mistaken for patriotism. As they lose their grip, human sympathy has its natural play between nations, and civilization has a chance. With any Emperor of Germany left the war will have been half in vain.

If we (the U. S. A.) cultivate the manly qualities and throw off our cranks and read our own history and be true to our traditions and blood and get some political vigor; then if we emancipate ourselves from the isolation theory and from the landlubber theory—get into the world and build ships, ships, ships, ships, and run them to the ends of the seas, we can dominate the world in trade and in political thought.

You know I have moments when it occurs to me that perhaps I'd better give whatever working years I may have to telling this story—the story of the larger meaning of the war. There's no bigger theme—never was one so big.

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

"One thing pleases me," Page wrote to his son Arthur, "I never lost faith in the American people. It is now clear that I was right in feeling that they would have gladly come in any time after the *Lusitania* crime, Middle West in the front. . . . We are as Anglo-Saxon as we ever were. If Hughes had had sense and courage enough to say: 'I'm for war, war to save our honor and to save democracy,' he would now be President. If Wilson had said that, Hughes would have carried no important states in the Union. The suppressed people would have risen to either of them. That's God's truth as I believe it. The real

United States is made up of you and Frank and the Page boys at Aberdeen and of the 10,000,000 other young fellows who are ready to do the job and who instinctively see the whole truth of the situation. But of course what the people would not have done under certain conditions—that water also has flowed over the dam; I mention it only because I have resolutely kept my faith in the people and there has been nothing in recent events that has shaken it."

A letter which Page wrote on this same April 1st is interesting in that it outlines almost completely the war policy that was finally carried out:

To David F. Houston[1]

Embassy of the United States of America,

April 1. 1917.

DEAR HOUSTON:

The Administration can save itself from becoming a black blot on American history only by vigorous action—acts such as these:

Putting our navy to work—vigorous work—wherever and however is wisest. I have received the Government's promise to send an admiral here at once for a conference. We must work out with the British Navy a program whereby we can best help; and we must carry it without hesitancy or delay.

Sending over an expeditionary military force immediately—a small one, but as large as we can, as an earnest of a larger one to come. This immediate small one will have a good moral effect; and we need all the moral reinstatement that we can get in the estimation of the world; our moral stock is lower than,

[1] Secretary of Agriculture in President Wilson's Cabinet.

I fear, any of you at home can possibly realize. As for a larger expeditionary force later—even that ought to be sent quite early. It can and must spend some time in training in France, whatever its training beforehand may have been. All the military men agree that soldiers in France back of the line can be trained in at least half the time that they can be trained anywhere else. . . . They can be trained into fighting men—into an effective army—in about one third of the time that would be required at home.

I suppose, of course, we shall make at once a large loan to the Allies at a low rate of interest. That is most important, but that alone will not save us. We must also *fight*.

All the ships we can get—build, requisition, or confiscate—are needed immediately.

Navy, army, money, ships—these are the first things, but by no means all. We must make some expression of a conviction that there is a moral question of right and wrong involved in this war—a question of humanity, a question of democracy. So far we have (officially) spoken only of the wrongs done to our ships and citizens. Deep wrongs have been done to all our moral ideas, to our ideals. We have sunk very low in European opinion because we do not seem to know even yet that a German victory would be less desirable than (say) a Zulu victory of the world.

We must go in with the Allies, not begin a mere single fight against submarines. We must sign the pact of London—not make a separate peace.

We mustn't longer spin dreams about peace, nor leagues to enforce peace, nor the Freedom of the Seas. These things are mere intellectual diversions of minds out of contact with realities. Every political and social ideal we have is at stake. If we make them

secure, we'll save Europe from destruction and save ourselves, too.

I pray for vigor and decision and clear-cut resolute action.

(1) The Navy—full strength, no "grapejuice" action.

(2) An immediate expeditionary force.

(3) A larger expeditionary force very soon.

(4) A large loan at a low interest.

(5) Ships, ships, ships.

(6) A clear-cut expression of the moral issue. Thus (and only thus) can we swing into a new era, with a world born again.

Yours in strictest confidence,

W. H. P.

A memorandum, written on April 3rd, the day after President Wilson advised Congress to declare a state of war with Germany:

The Day

When I went to see Mr. Balfour to-day he shook my hand warmly and said: "It's a great day for the world." And so has everybody said, in one way or another, that I have met to-day.

The President's speech did not appear in the morning papers—only a very brief summary in one or two of them; but the meaning of it was clear. The fact that the House of Representatives organized itself in one day and that the President addressed Congress on the evening of that day told the story. The noon papers had the President's speech in full; and everybody applauds.

My "Cabinet" meeting this morning was unusually

interesting; and the whole group has never before been so delighted. I spoke of the suggestive, constructive work we have already done in making reports on various war preparations and activities of this kingdom. "Now we have greater need than ever, every man to do constructive work—to think of plans to serve. We are in this excellent strategical position in the capital of the greatest belligerent—a position which I thank my stars, the President, and all the powers that be for giving us. We can each strive to justify our existence."

These jottings give only a faint impression of the change which the American action wrought in Page. The strain which he had undergone for twenty-nine months had been intense; it had had the most unfortunate effect upon his health; and the sudden lifting might have produced that reaction for the worse which is not unusual after critical experiences of this kind. But the gratification which Page felt in the fact that the American spirit had justified his confidence gave him almost a certain exuberance of contentment. Londoners who saw him at that time describe him as acting like a man from whose shoulders a tremendous weight had suddenly been removed. For more than two years Page had been compelled, officially at least, to assume a "neutrality" with which he had never had the slightest sympathy, but the necessity for this mask now no longer existed. A well-known Englishman happened to meet Page leaving his house in Grosvenor Square the day after the Declaration of War. He stopped and shook the Ambassador's hand.

"Thank God," the Englishman said, "that there is one hypocrite less in London to-day."

"What do you mean?" asked Page.

"I mean you. Pretending all this time that you were neutral! That isn't necessary any longer."

"You are right!" the Ambassador answered as he walked on with a laugh and a wave of the hand.

A few days after the Washington Declaration, the American Luncheon Club held a feast in honor of the event. This organization had a membership of representative American business men in London, but its behavior during the war had not been based upon Mr. Wilson's idea of neutrality. Indeed its tables had so constantly rung with denunciations of the *Lusitania* notes that all members of the American Embassy, from Page down, had found it necessary to refrain from attending its proceedings. When Page arose to address his compatriots on this occasion, therefore, he began with the significant words, "I am glad to be back with you *again*," and the mingled laughter and cheers with which this remark was received indicated that his hearers had caught the point.

The change took place not only in Page, but in London and the whole of Great Britain. An England that had been saying harsh things of the United States for nearly two years now suddenly changed its attitude. Both houses of Parliament held commemorative sessions in honor of America's participation; in the Commons Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Asquith, and other leaders welcomed their new allies, and in the Upper Chamber Lord Curzon, Lord Bryce, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and others similarly voiced their admiration. The Stars and Stripes almost instantaneously broke out on private dwellings, shops, hotels, and theaters; street hucksters did a thriving business selling rosettes of the American colors, which even the most stodgy Englishmen did not disdain to wear

in their buttonholes; wherever there was a band or an orchestra, the "Star-Spangled Banner" acquired a sudden popularity; and the day even came when the American and the British flags flew side by side over the Houses of Parliament—the first occasion in history that any other than the British standard had received this honor.

The Ambassador's mail underwent a complete transformation. His correspondence of the preceding two years, enormous in its extent, had contained letters, at times sorrowful, at others abusive, even occasionally threatening, varying in their style from cultivated English to the grossest illiteracy, now written in red ink to emphasize their bitterness, now printed in large block letters to preserve their anonymity; they aroused in Page only a temporary amusement. But the letters that began to pour in upon him after our Declaration, many of them from the highest placed men and women in the Kingdom, brought out more vividly than anything else the changed position of his country.

Probably the letter which gave Page the greatest pleasure was that which came from the statesman whose courtesy and broad outlook had eased the Ambassador's task in the old neutrality days. In 1916, Sir Edward Grey—now become Viscount Grey of Fallodon—had resigned office, forced out, Page says in one of his letters, mainly because he had refused to push the blockade to a point where it might produce a break with the United States. When the great occasion for which he had prepared had come, in Grey's mind this signified more than a help to England in soldiers and ships: it meant bringing together the two branches of a common race for the promotion of common ideals.

From Viscount Grey of Fallodon

Rosehall Post Office,
Sutherland,
April 8, 1917.

DEAR MR. PAGE:

This is a line that needs no answer to express my congratulations on President Wilson's address. I can't express adequately all that I feel. Great gratitude and great hope are in my heart. I hope now that some great and abiding good to the world will yet be wrought out of all this welter of evil. Recent events in Russia, too, stimulate this hope: they are a good in themselves, but not the power for good in this war that a great and firmly established free country like the United States can be. The President's address and the way it has been followed up in your country is a splendid instance of great action finely inspired. I glow with admiration.

Yours sincerely,
GREY OF FALLODON.

To Frank N. Doubleday

American Embassy,
London, May 3, 1917.

DEAR EFFENDI:

I aim this at you. It may hit a German submarine. But we've got to take our chances in these days of risk. Your letter from the tropics—a letter from you from any place is as scarce as peace!—gave me a pleasant thrill and reminder of a previous state of existence, a long way back in the past. I wonder if, on your side the ocean, you are living at the rate of a century a year, as we are here? Here in bountiful

England we are living on rations. I spent a night with the King a fortnight ago, and he gave us only so much bread, one egg apiece, and—lemonade. We are to begin bread tickets next week. All this is perfectly healthful and wholesome and as much as I ever eat. But the hard part of it is that it's necessary. We haven't more than six weeks' food supply and the submarines sunk eighty-eight ships—237,000 tons—last week. These English do not publish these harrowing facts, and nobody knows them but a few official people. And they are destroying the submarines at a most beggarly slow rate. They work far out at sea—100 to 200 miles—and it's as hard to find them as it would be to find whales. The simple truth is we are in a dangerous plight. If they could stop this submarine warfare, the war would pretty quickly be won, for the Germans are in a far worse plight for food and materials and they are getting much the worst of it on land. The war would be won this summer or autumn if the submarine could be put out of business. If it isn't, the Germans may use this success to keep their spirits up and go on till next year.

We [the United States] have about 40 destroyers. We are sending over 6! I'm doing my best to persuade the Government at Washington to send every one we have. But, since the British conceal the facts from their own press and the people and from all the world, the full pressure of the situation is hard to exert on Washington. Our Admiral [Sims] and I are trying our best, and we are spending enough on cables to build a destroyer. All this, you must, of course, regard as a dark secret; but it's a devilish black secret.

I don't mean that there's any danger of losing the war. Even if the British armies have to have their

food cut down and people here go hungry, they'll win; but the winning may be a long time off. Nothing but their continued success can keep the Germans going. Their people are war-weary and hungry. Austria is knocked out and is starving. Turkey is done up but can go on living on nothing, but not fighting much more. When peace comes, there'll be a general famine, on the continent at least, and no ships to haul food. This side of the world will have to start life all over again—with insufficient men to carry things on and innumerable maimed men who'll have (more or less) to be cared for. The horror of the whole thing nobody realizes. We've all got used to it here; and nobody clearly remembers just what the world was like in peace times; those times were so far away. All this I write not to fill you with horrors but to prove that I speak the literal truth when I say that it seems a hundred years since I had before heard from you.

. . . It's a literal fact that many a month I do not have an hour to do with as I please nor to think about what I please, from the time I wake up till I go to bed. In spite of twenty-four secretaries (the best fellows that ever were and the best staff that any embassy ever had in the world) more and more work comes to me. I thank Heaven we no longer have the interests of Germany, Austria, and Turkey to look after; but with our coming into the war, work in general has increased enormously. I have to spend very much more time with the different departments of the British Government on war plans and such like things. They have welcomed us in very handsomely; and one form of their welcome is consulting with me about—navy plans, war plans, loans of billions, ships, censorship, secret service—everything you ever heard of.

At first it seemed a little comical for the admirals and generals and the Governor of the Bank of England to come and ask for advice. But when I gave it and it worked out well, I went on and, after all, the thing's easier than it looks. With a little practice you can give these fellows several points in the game and play a pretty good hand. They don't know half as much as you might suppose they'd know. All these years of lecturing the State Department and the President got my hand in! The whole game is far easier than any small business. You always play with blue chips better than you play with white ones.

This country and these people are not the country and the people they were three years ago. They are very different. They are much more democratic, far less cocksure, far less haughty, far humbler. The man at the head of the army rose from the ranks. The Prime Minister is a poor Welsh schoolteacher's son, without early education. The man who controls all British shipping began life as a shipping "clark," at ten shillings a week. Yet the Lords and Ladies, too, have shown that they were made of the real stuff. This experience is making England over again. There never was a more interesting thing to watch and to be a part of.

There are about twenty American organizations here—big, little, rag-tag, and bobtail. When we declared war, every one of 'em proceeded to prepare for some sort of celebration. There would have been an epidemic of Fourth-of-July oratory all over the town—before we'd done anything—Americans spouting over the edges and killing Kruger with their mouths. I got representatives of 'em all together and proposed that we hold our tongues till we'd won the war—then we can take London.

And to give one occasion when we might all assemble and dedicate ourselves to this present grim business, I arranged for an American Dedicatory Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. The royal family came, the Government came, the Allied diplomats came, my Lords and Ladies came, one hundred wounded American (Canadian) soldiers came—the pick of the Kingdom; my Navy and Army staff went in full uniform, the Stars and Stripes hung before the altar, a double brass band played the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and an American bishop (Brent) preached a red-hot American sermon, the Archbishop of Canterbury delivered the benediction; and (for the first time in English history) a foreign flag (the Stars and Stripes) flew over the Houses of Parliament. It was the biggest occasion, so they say, that St. Paul's ever had. And there's been no spilling of American oratory since! If you had published a shilling edition of the words and music of the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the "Battle Hymn" you could have sent a cargo of 'em here and sold them. There isn't paper enough in this Kingdom to get out an edition here.

Give my love to all the Doubledays and to all the fellows in the shop, and (I wonder if you will) try your hand at another letter. You write very legibly these days!

Sincerely yours,
WALTER H. PAGE.

CHAPTER XV

PAGE—THE MAN

THE entrance of America into the war represented for Page a personal triumph; there were many things still to be done, it is true, and he, as always, was active in advancing the interests that were nearest his heart; yet the mighty relief that followed the American declaration was the kind that one experiences after accomplishing the greatest task of a lifetime. Page's letters have contained many references to the sense of moral isolation which his country's policy had forced upon him; he probably exaggerated his feeling that there was a tendency to avoid him; this was merely a reflection of his own inclination to keep away from all but the official people.

He now had more leisure and certainly more interest in cultivating the friends that he had made in Great Britain. For the fact is that, during all these engrossing years, Page had been more than an ambassador; by the time the United States entered the war he had attained an assured personal position in the life of the British capital. He had long since demonstrated his qualifications for a post, which, in the distinction of the men who have occupied it, has few parallels in diplomacy. The scholarly Lowell, the courtly Bayard, the companionable Hay, the ever-humorous Choate, had set a standard for American ambassadors which had made the place a difficult one for their successors. Though Page had characteristics in common

with all these men, his personality had its own distinctive tang; and it was something new to the political and social life of London. And the British capital, which is extremely exacting and even merciless in its demands upon its important personages, had found him vastly entertaining. "I didn't know there could be anything so American as Page except Mark Twain," a British literary man once remarked; and it was probably this strong American quality, this directness and even breeziness of speech and of method, this absence of affectation, this almost openly expressed contempt for finesse and even for tradition, combined with those other traits which we like to think of as American—an upright purpose, a desire to serve not only his own country but mankind—which made the British public look upon Page as one of the most attractive and useful figures in a war-torn Europe.

There was a certain ruggedness in Page's exterior which the British regarded as distinctly in keeping with this American flavor. The Ambassador was not a handsome man. To one who had heard much of the liveliness of his conversation and presence a first impression was likely to be disappointing. His figure at this time was tall, gaunt, and lean—and he steadily lost weight during his service in England; his head was finely shaped—it was large, with a high forehead, his thin gray hair rather increasing its intellectual aspect; and his big frank brown eyes reflected that keen zest for life, that unsleeping interest in everything about him, that ever-working intelligence and sympathy which were the man's predominant traits. But a very large nose at first rather lessened the pleasing effects of his other features, and a rather weather-beaten, corrugated face gave a preliminary suggestion of roughness. Yet Page had only to begin talking and

the impression immediately changed. "He puts his mind to yours," Dr. Johnson said, describing the sympathetic qualities of a friend, and the same was true of Page. Half-a-dozen sentences, spoken in his quick, soft, and ingratiating accents, accompanied by the most genial smile, at once converted the listener into a friend. Few men have ever lived who more quickly responded to this human relationship. The Ambassador, at the simple approach of a human being, became as a man transformed. Tired though he might be, low in spirits as he not infrequently was, the press of a human hand at once changed him into an animated and radiating companion. This responsiveness deceived all his friends in the days of his last illness. His intimates who dropped in to see Page invariably went away much encouraged and spread optimistic reports about his progress. A few minutes' conversation with Page would deceive even his physicians. The explanation was a simple one: the human presence had an electric effect upon him, and it is a revealing sidelight on Page's character that almost any man or woman could produce this result. As an editor, the readiness with which he would listen to suggestions from the humblest source was a constant astonishment to his associates. The office boy had as accessible an approach to Page as had his partners. He never treated an idea, even a grotesque one, with contempt; he always had time to discuss it, to argue it out, and no one ever left his presence thinking that he had made an absurd proposal. Thus Page had a profound respect for a human being simply because he was a human being; the mere fact that a man, woman, or child lived and breathed, had his virtues and his failings, constituted in Page's imagination a tremendous fact. He could not wound such a living creature any more than

he could wound a flower or a tree; consequently he treated every person as an important member of the universe. Not infrequently, indeed, he stormed at public men, but his thunder, after all, was not very terrifying.

Page said "Good-morning" to his doorman with the same deference that he showed to Sir Edward Grey, and there was not a little stenographer in the building whose joys and sorrows did not arouse in him the most friendly interest. Some of the most affecting letters written about Page, indeed, have come from these daily associates of more humble station. "We so often speak of Mr. Page," writes one of the Embassy staff—all English servants, at the Embassy; "we all loved him equally, and hardly a day passes that something does not remind us of him, and I often fancy that I hear his laugh, so full of kindness and love of life." And the impression left on those in high position was the same. "I have seen ladies representing all that is most worldly in Mayfair," writes Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, "start at the sudden thought of Page's illness, their eyes glistening with tears."

Perhaps what gave most charm to this human side was the fact that Page was fundamentally such a scholarly man. This was the aspect which especially delighted his English friends. He preached democracy and Americanism with an emphasis that almost suggested the backwoodsman—the many ideas on these subjects that appear in his letters Page never hesitated to set forth with all due resonance at London dinner tables—yet he phrased his creed in language that was little less than literary style, and illuminated it with illustrations and a philosophy that were the product of the most exhaustive reading. "Your

ambassador has taught us something that we did not know before," an English friend remarked to an American. "That is that a man can be a democrat and a man of culture at the same time." Page likewise spoke a brand of idiomatic English which immediately put him in a class by himself. He regarded words as sacred things. He used them, in his writing or in his speech, with the utmost care and discrimination; yet this did not result in a halting or stilted style; he spoke with the utmost ease, going rapidly from thought to thought, choosing invariably the one needful word, lighting up the whole with whimsicalities all his own, occasionally emphasizing a good point by looking downward and glancing over his eyeglasses, perhaps, if he knew his companion intimately, now and then giving him a monitory tap on the knee. Page, in fact, was a great and incessant talker; hardly anything delighted him more than a companionable exchange of ideas and impressions; he was seldom so busy that he would not push aside his papers for a chat; and he would talk with almost anyone, on almost any subject—his secretaries, his stenographers, his office boys, and any crank who succeeded in getting by the doorman—for, in spite of his lively warnings against the breed, Page did really love cranks and took a collector's joy in uncovering new types.

Page's voice was normally quiet; though he had spent all his early life in the South, the characteristic Southern accents were ordinarily not observable; yet his intonation had a certain gentleness that was probably an inheritance of his Southern breeding. Thus, when he first began talking, his words would ripple along quietly and rapidly; a characteristic pose was to sit calmly, with one knee thrown over the other, his hands folded; as his interest increased, however, he

would get up, perhaps walk across the room, or stand before the fireplace, his hands behind his back; a large cigar, sometimes unlighted, at other times emitting huge clouds of smoke, would oscillate from one side of his mouth to the other; his talk would grow in earnestness, his voice grow louder, his words come faster and faster, until finally they would gush forth in a mighty torrent.

All Page's personal traits are explained by that one characteristic which tempered all others, his sense of humor. That he was above all a serious-minded man his letters show; yet his spirits were constantly alert for the amusing, the grotesque, and the contradictory; like all men who are really serious and alive to the pathos of existence, he loved a hearty laugh, especially as he found it a relief from the gloom that filled his every waking moment in England. Page himself regarded this ability to smile as an indispensable attribute to a well-rounded life. "No man can be a gentleman," he once declared, "who does not have a sense of humor." Only he who possessed this gift, Page believed, had an imaginative insight into the failings and the virtues of his brothers; only he could have a tolerant attitude toward the stupidities of his fellows, to say nothing of his own. And humor with him assumed various shades; now it would flash in an epigram, or smile indulgently at a passing human weakness; now and then it would break out into genial mockery; occasionally it would manifest itself as sheer horse-play; and less frequently it would become sardonic or even savage. It was in this latter spirit that he once described a trio of Washington statesmen, whose influence he abhorred as, "three minds that occupy a single vacuum." He once convulsed a Scottish audience by describing the national motto of Scotland

—and doing so with a broad burr in his voice that seemed almost to mark the speaker a native to the heath—as "Liber-r-ty, fra-a-ternity and f-r-r-ugality." The policy of his country occasioned many awkward moments which, thanks to his talent for amiable raillery, he usually succeeded in rendering harmless. Not infrequently Page's fellow guests at the dinner table would think the American attitude toward Germany a not inappropriate topic for small talk. "Mr. Page," remarked an exaltedly titled lady, in a conversational pause, "when is your country going to get into the war?" The more discreet members of the company gasped, but Page was not disturbed. "Please give us at least ninety days," he answered, and an exceedingly disagreeable situation was thus relieved by general laughter.

On another occasion his repudiation of this flippant spirit took a more solemn and even more effective form. The time was a few days before the United States had declared war. Bernstorff had been dismissed; events were rapidly rushing toward the great climax; yet the behavior of the Washington Administration was still inspiring much caustic criticism. The Pages were present at one of the few dinners which they attended in the course of this crisis; certain smart and tactless guests did not seem to regard their presence as a bar to many gibes against the American policy. Page sat through it all impassive, never betraying the slightest resentment.

Presently the ladies withdrew. Page found himself sitting next to Mr. Harold Nicolson, an important official in the Foreign Office. It so happened that Mr. Nicolson and Page were the only two members of the company who were the possessors of a great secret which made ineffably silly all the chatter that had taken

place during the dinner; this was that the United States had decided on war against Germany and would issue the declaration in a few days.

"Well, Mr. Nicolson," said Page, "I think that you and I will drink a glass of wine together."

The two men quietly lifted their glasses and drank the silent toast. Neither made the slightest reference to the forthcoming event. Perhaps the other men present were a little mystified, but in a few days they understood what it had meant, and also learned how effectively they had been rebuked.

"Is it any wonder," says Mr. Nicolson, telling this story, "that I think that Mr. Page is perhaps the greatest gentleman I have ever known? He has only one possible competitor for this distinction—and that is Arthur Balfour."

An anecdote reminiscent of his editorial days was his retort to S. S. McClure, the editor of *McClure's Magazine*.

"Page," said Mr. McClure, "there are only three great editors in the United States."

"Who's the third one, Sam?" asked Page.

The great service in St. Paul's Cathedral, in commemoration of America's entry into the war, has already been described. A number of wounded Americans, boys whose zeal for the Allies had led them to enlist in the Canadian Army, were conspicuous participants in this celebration. After the solemn religious ceremonies, the Ambassador and these young men betook themselves for lunch to a well-known London restaurant. In an interval of the conversation one of the Americans turned to Page.

"Mr. Ambassador, there was just one thing wrong with that service."

"What was that?"

"We wanted to yell, and we couldn't."

"Then why don't you yell now?"

The boy jumped on a chair and began waving his napkin. "The Ambassador says we may yell," he cried. "Let's yell!"

"And so," said Page, telling the story, "they yelled for five minutes and I yelled with them. We all felt better in consequence."

This geniality, this disposition not to take life too solemnly, sometimes lightened up the sombre atmosphere of the Foreign Office itself. "Mr. Balfour went on a sort of mild rampage yesterday," Page records. "The British and American navies had come to an arrangement whereby the Brazilian ships that are coming over to help us fight should join the American unit, not the British, as was at first proposed. Washington telegraphed me that the British Minister at Rio was blocking the game by standing out for the first British idea—that the Brazilian ships should join the British. It turned out in the conversation that the British Minister had not been informed of the British-American naval arrangement. Mr. Balfour sent for Lord Hardinge. He called in one of the private secretaries. Was such a thing ever heard of?

" 'Did you ever know,' said the indignant Mr. Balfour, turning to me, 'of such a thing as a minister not even being informed of his government's decisions?' 'Yes,' I said, 'if I ransack my memory diligently, I think I could find such cases.' The meeting went into laughter!"

Evidently the troubles which Page was having with his own State Department were not unfamiliar to British officialdom.

Greatly as Page loved England he never ceased to preach his Americanism. That he preferred his own

country to any other and that he believed that it was its greatest destiny to teach its institutions to the rest of the world, Page's letters show; yet this was with him no cheap spread-eagleism; it was a definite philosophy which the Ambassador had completely thought out. He never hesitated to express his democratic opinions in any company, and only once or twice were there any signs that these ideas jarred a little in certain strongholds of conservatism.

Even in the darkest period of American neutrality Page's faith in the American people remained complete. After this country had entered the war and the apparent slowness of the Washington Administration had raised certain questionings, Page never doubted that the people themselves, however irresolute and lukewarm their representatives might be, would force the issue to its only logical end. Even so friendly a man as Mr. Balfour once voiced a popular apprehension that the United States might not get into the war with all its strength or might withdraw prematurely. This was in the early period of our participation. "Who is going to stop the American people and how?" Page quickly replied. "I think that was a good answer," he said, as he looked back at the episode in the summer of 1918, when hundreds of thousands of Americans were landing in France every month. A scrap of his writing records a discussion at a dinner party on this question: "If you could have a month in any time and any country, what time and what country would you choose?" The majority voted for England in the time of Elizabeth, but Page's preference was for Athens in the days of Pericles. Then came a far more interesting debate: "If you could spend a second lifetime when and where would you choose to spend it?" On this Page had not a mo-

ment's hesitation: "In the future and in the U. S. A.!" and he upheld his point with such persuasiveness that he carried the whole gathering with him. His love of anything suggesting America came out on all occasions. One of his English hostesses once captivated him by serving corn bread at a luncheon. "The American Ambassador and corn bread!" he exclaimed, with all the delight of a schoolboy. Again he was invited, with another distinguished American, to serve as godfather at the christening of the daughter of an American woman who had married an Englishman. When the ceremony was finished he leaned over the font toward his fellow godfather. "Born on July 4th," he exclaimed, "of an American mother! And we two Yankee godfathers! We'll see that this child is taught the Constitution of the United States!"

The judgments which Page passed on men and things were quick and they were not infrequently wise. One of these judgments had historic consequences the end of which cannot even yet be foreseen. On the outbreak of hostilities, as already related, an American Relief Committee was organized in London to look out for the interests of stranded Americans. Page kept a close eye on its operations, and soon his attention was attracted by the noiseless efficiency of an American engineer of whom he had already caught a few fleeting glimpses in the period of peace. After he had finished his work with the American Committee, Mr. Herbert C. Hoover began to make his arrangements to leave for the United States. His private affairs had been disorganized; he had already sent his family home, and his one ambition was to get on the first ship sailing for the United States. The idea of Belgian relief, or of feeding starving people anywhere, had never occurred to him. At this moment

an American, Mr. Millard K. Shaler, came from Brussels and gave the most harrowing account of conditions in Belgium. Mr. Hoover took Mr. Shaler to Page, who immediately became sympathetic. The Ambassador arranged an interview between Mr. Hoover and Sir Edward Grey, who likewise showed great interest and promised government support. Soon afterward three Belgians arrived and described the situation as immediately alarming: Brussels had only food enough to feed the people for thirty-six hours; after that, unless help were forthcoming, the greatest distress would set in. Five men—Page, the three Belgians, and Mr. Hoover—at once got together at the American Embassy. Upon the result of that meeting hung the fate of millions of people. Who before had ever undertaken a scheme for feeding an entire nation for an indefinite period? That there were great obstacles in the way all five men knew; the British Admiralty in particular were strongly opposed; there was a fear that the food, if it could be acquired and sent to Belgium, would find its way to the German Army. Unless the British Government could be persuaded that this could be prevented, the enterprise would fail at the start. How could it be done?

"There is only one way,' said Page. "Some government must give its guarantee that this food will get to the Belgian people." "And, of course," he added, "there is only one government that can do that. It must be the American government."

Mr. Hoover pointed out that any such guarantee involved the management of transportation; only by controlling the railroads could the American Government make sure that this food would reach its destination.

And that, added Page, involved a director—some

one man who could take charge of the whole enterprise. Who should it be?

Then Page turned quickly to the young American. "Hoover, you're It!"

Mr. Hoover made no reply; he neither accepted nor rejected the proposal. He merely glanced at the clock, then got up and silently left the room. In a few minutes he returned and entered again into the discussion.

"Hoover, why did you get up and leave us so abruptly?" asked Page, a little puzzled over this behavior.

"I saw by the clock," came the answer—and it was a story that Page was fond of telling, as illustrating the rapidity with which Mr. Hoover worked—"that there was an hour left before the Exchange closed in New York. So I went out and cabled, buying several millions of bushels of wheat—for the Belgians, of course."

One aspect of Page that remains fixed in the memory of his associates is his unwearied industry with the pen. His official communications and his ordinary correspondence Page dictated; but his personal letters he wrote with his own hand. He himself deplored the stenographer as a deterrent to good writing; the habit of dictating, he argued, led to wordiness and general looseness of thought. Practically all the letters published in these volumes were therefore the painstaking work of Page's own pen. His handwriting was so beautiful and clear that, in his editorial days, the printers much preferred it as "copy" to typewritten matter. This habit is especially surprising in view of the Ambassador's enormous epistolary output. It must be remembered that the letters included in the present book are only a selection from the vast num-

ber that he wrote during his five years in England; many of these letters fill twenty and thirty pages of script; the labor involved in turning them out, day after day, seems fairly astounding. Yet with Page this was a labor of love. All through his Ambassadorship he seemed hardly contented unless he had a pen in his hand. As his secretaries would glance into his room, there they would see the Ambassador bending over his desk—writing, writing, eternally writing; sometimes he would call them in, and read what he had written, never hesitating to tear up the paper if their unfavorable criticisms seemed to him well taken. The Ambassador kept a desk also in his bedroom, and here his most important correspondence was attended to. Page's all-night self-communings before his wood fire have already been described, and he had another nocturnal occupation that was similarly absorbing. Many a night, after returning late from his office or from dinner, he would put on his dressing gown, sit at his bedroom desk, and start pouring forth his inmost thoughts in letters to the President, Colonel House, or some other correspondent. His pen flew over the paper with the utmost rapidity and the Ambassador would sometimes keep at his writing until two or three o'clock in the morning. There is a frequently expressed fear that letter-writing is an art of the past; that the intervention of the stenographer has destroyed its spontaneity; yet it is evident that in Page the present generation has a letter-writer of the old-fashioned kind, for he did all his writing with his own hand and under circumstances that would assure the utmost freshness and vividness to the result.

Besides his official activities Page performed great services to the two countries by his speeches. The demands of this kind on an American Ambassador are

always numerous, but Page's position was an exceptional one; it was his fortune to represent America at a time when his own country and Great Britain were allies in a great war. He could therefore have spent practically all his time in speaking had he been so disposed. Of the hundreds of invitations received he was able to accept only a few, but most of these occasions became memorable ones. In any spectacular sense Page was not an orator; he rather despised the grand manner, with its flourishes and its tricks; the name of public speaker probably best describes his talents on the platform. Here his style was earnest and conversational: his speech flowed with the utmost readiness; it was invariably quiet and restrained; he was never aiming at big effects, but his words always went home. Of the series of speeches that stand to his credit in England probably the one that will be longest remembered is that delivered at Plymouth on August 4, 1917, the third anniversary of the war. This not only reviewed the common history of the two nations for three hundred years, and suggested a program for making the bonds tighter yet, but it brought the British public practical assurances as to America's intentions in the conflict. Up to that time there had been much vagueness and doubt; no official voice had spoken the clear word for the United States; the British public did not know what to expect from their kinsmen overseas. But after Page's Plymouth speech the people of Great Britain looked forward with complete confidence to the coöperation of the two countries and to the inevitable triumph of this coöperation.

And so for five busy and devastating years Page did his work. The stupidities of Washington might drive him to desperation, ill-health might increase his periods of despondency, the misunderstandings that

he occasionally had with the British Government might add to his discouragements, but a naturally optimistic and humorous temperament overcame all obstacles, and did its part in bringing about that united effort which ended in victory. And that it was a great part, the story of his Ambassadorship abundantly proves. Page was not the soldier working in the blood and slime of Flanders, or the sea-fighter spending day and night around the foggy coast of Ireland, nor the statesman bending parliaments to his will and manipulating nations and peoples in the mighty game whose stake was civilization itself. But history will indeed be ungrateful if it ever forget the gaunt and pensive figure, clad in a dressing gown, sitting long into the morning before the smoldering fire at 6 Grosvenor Square, seeking to find some way to persuade a reluctant and hesitating President to lead his country in the defense of liberty and determined that, so far as he could accomplish it, the nation should play a part in the great assize that was in keeping with its traditions and its instincts.

CHAPTER XVI

A CRISIS ON THE WESTERN FRONT

To Arthur W. Page

American Embassy,
London, Sept. 3, 1917.

DEAR ARTHUR:

. . . The President has sent Admiral Mayo over to study the naval situation. So far as I can learn the feeling at Washington is that the British Navy has done nothing. Why, it hasn't attacked the German naval bases and destroyed the German navy and ended the war! Why not? I have a feeling that Mayo will supplement and support Sims in his report. Then gradually the naval men at Washington may begin to understand and they may get the important facts into the President's head. Meantime the submarine work of the Germans continues to win the war, although the Government and the people here and in the United States appear not to believe it. They are still destroying seventy-five British ships a month besides an additional (smaller) number of allied and neutral ships. And all the world together is not turning out seventy-five ships a month; nor are we all destroying submarines as fast as the Germans are turning *them* out. Yet all the politicians are putting on a cheerful countenance about it because the Germans are not starving England out and are not just now sinking passenger ships. They may begin this again at any time. They have come within a few feet of torpedoing two of our American liners. The submarine *is* the

war yet, but nobody seems disposed to believe it. They'll probably wake up with a great shock some day—or the war may possibly end before the destruction of ships becomes positively fatal.

The President's letter to the Pope gives him the moral and actual leadership now. The Hohenzollerns must go. Somehow the subjects and governments of these Old World kingdoms have not hitherto laid emphasis on this. There's still a divinity that doth hedge a king in most European minds. To me this is the very queerest thing in the whole world. What again if Germany, Austria, Spain should follow Russia? Whether they do or not, crowns will not henceforth be so popular. There is an unbounded enthusiasm here for the President's letter and for the President in general.

In spite of certain details which it seems impossible to make understood on the Potomac, the whole American preparation and enthusiasm seem from this distance to be very fine. The *people* seem in earnest. When I read about tax bills, about the food regulation and a thousand other such things, I am greatly gratified. And it proves that we were right when we said that during the days of neutrality the people were held back. It all looks exceedingly good from this distance, and it makes me homesick.

To Frank N. Doubleday

London, November 9, 1917.

DEAR EFFENDI:

. . . This infernal thing drags its slow length along so that we cannot see even a day ahead, not to say a week, or a year. If any man here allowed the horrors of it to dwell on his mind he would go mad, so

we have to skip over these things somewhat lightly and try to keep the long, definite aim in our thoughts and to work away distracted as little as possible by the butchery and by the starvation that is making this side of the world a shambles and a wilderness. There is hardly a country on the Continent where people are not literally starving to death, and in many of them by hundreds of thousands; and this state of things is going to continue for a good many years after the war. God knows we (I mean the American people) are doing everything we can to alleviate it, but there is so much more to be done than any group of forces can possibly do, that I have a feeling that we have hardly touched the borders of the great problem itself.

Here in London we are away from all that. In spite of the rations we get quite enough to eat and it's as good as it is usually in England, but we have no right to complain. Of course we are subject to air raids, and the wise air people here think that early next spring we are going to be bombarded with thousands of aëroplanes, and with new kinds of bombs and gases in a well-organized effort to try actually to destroy London. Possibly that will come; we must simply take our chance, every man sticking to his job. Already the slate shingles on my roof have been broken, and bricks have been knocked down my chimney; the skylight was hit and glass fell down all through the halls, and the nose of a shrapnel shell, weighing eight pounds, fell just in front of my doorway and rolled in my area. This is the sort of thing we incidentally get, not of course from the enemy directly, but from the British guns in London which shoot these things at German aëroplanes. What goes up must come down. Between our own defenses

and the enemy, God knows which will kill us first!

In spite of all this I put my innocent head on my pillow every night and get a good night's sleep after the bombing is done, and I thank Heaven that nothing interrupts my sleep. This, and a little walking, which is all I get time to do in these foggy days, constitute my life outdoors and precious little of it is outdoors.

Then on every block that I know of in London there is a hospital or supply place and the ambulances are bringing the poor fellows in all the time. We don't get any gasoline to ride so we have to walk. We don't get any white bread so we have to eat stuff made of flour and corn meal ground so fine that it isn't good. While everybody gets a little thinner, the universal opinion is that they also get a little better, and nobody is going to die here of hunger. We feel a little more cheerful about the submarines than we did some time ago. For some reason they are not getting so many ships. One reason, I am glad to believe, is that they are getting caught themselves. If I could remember all the stories that I hear of good fighting with the submarines I could keep you up two nights when I get home, but in these days one big thing after another crowds so in men's minds that the Lord knows if, when I get home, I shall remember anything.

Always heartily yours,
W. H. P.

To Arthur W. Page

American Embassy,
London, December 23, 1917.

DEAR ARTHUR:

I sent you a Christmas cable yesterday for everybody. That's about all I can send in these days of

slow mail and restricted shipping and enormously high prices; and you gave all the girls each $100 for me, for the babies and themselves? That'll show 'em that at least we haven't forgotten them. Forgotten? Your mother and I are always talking of the glad day when we can go home and live among them. We get as homesick as small boys their first month at a boarding school. Do you remember the day I left you at Lawrenceville, a forlorn and lonely kid?—It's like that.

A wave of depression hangs over the land like a London fog. And everybody on this tired-out side of the world shows a disposition to lean too heavily on us—to depend on us so completely that the fear arises that they may unconsciously relax their own utmost efforts when we begin to fight. Yet they can't in the least afford to relax, and, when the time comes, I dare say they will not. Yet the plain truth is, the French may give out next year for lack of men. I do not mean that they will quit, but that their fighting strength will have passed its maximum and that they will be able to play only a sort of second part.

. . . Waves of depression and of hope—if not of elation—come and go. I am told, and I think truly, that waves of weariness come in London far oftener and more depressingly than anywhere else in the Kingdom. There is no sign nor fear that the British will give up; they'll hold on till the end. Winston Churchill said to me last night: "We can hold on till next year. But after 1918, it'll be your fight. We'll have to depend on you." I told him that such a remark might well be accepted in some quarters as a British surrender. Then he came up to the scratch: "Surrender? Never." But I fear we need—in some practical and non-ostentatious way—now and then to

remind all these European folk that we get no particular encouragement by being unduly leaned on.

It is, however, the weariest Christmas in all British annals, certainly since the Napoleonic Wars. The untoward event after the British advance toward Cambrai caused the retirement of six British generals and deepened the depression here. Still I can see it now passing. Even a little victory will bring back a wave of cheerfulness.

Depression or elation show equally the undue strain that British nerves are under. I dare say nobody is entirely normal. . . . Everybody is overworked. Fewer people are literally truthful than ever before. Men and women break down and fall out of working ranks continuously. The number of men in the government who have disappeared from public view is amazing, the number that would like to disappear is still greater—from sheer overstrain. The Prime Minister is tired. Bonar Law in a long conference that Crosby and I had with him yesterday wearily ran all round a circle rather than hit a plain proposition with a clear decision. Mr. Balfour has kept his house from overwork a few days every recent week. I lunched with Mr. Asquith yesterday; even he seemed jaded; and Mrs. Asquith assured me that "everything is going to the devil damned fast." . . . Overwork and the loss of sons and friends—the list of the lost grows—always make an abnormal strain. The churches are fuller than ever before. So, too, are the "parlors" of the fortune-tellers. So also the theaters—in the effort to forget one's self. There are afternoon dances for young officers at home on leave: the curtains are drawn and the music is muffled. More marriages take place—blind and maimed, as well as the young fellows just going to France—than were

ever celebrated in any year within men's memory. Verse-writing is rampant. I have received enough odes and sonnets celebrating the Great Republic and the Great President to fill a folio volume. Several American Y. M. C. A. workers lately turned rampant Pacifists and had to be sent home. Colonial soldiers and now and then an American sailor turn up at our Y. M. C. A. huts as full as a goat and swear after the event that they never did such a thing before. Emotions and strain everywhere!

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

In March Page, a very weary man—as these letters indicate—took a brief holiday at St. Ives, on the coast of Cornwall. As he gazed out on the Atlantic, the yearning for home, for the sandhills and the pine trees of North Carolina, again took possession of his soul. Yet it is evident, from letters written at this time, that his mind reveled in a variety of subjects, ranging all the way from British food and vegetables to the settlement of the war and from secret diplomacy to literary style. He wrote to his son Ralph:

This St. Ives is the finest spot in England that I've ever seen. To-day has been as good as any March day you ever had in North Carolina—a fine air, clear sunshine, a beautiful sea—looking out toward the United States; and this country grows—the best golf links that I've ever seen in the world, and nothing else worth speaking of but—tin. Tin mines are all about here. Tin and golf are good crops in their way, but they don't feed the belly of man. As matters stand the only people that have fit things to eat now in all Europe are the American troops in France, and their

food comes out of tins chiefly. Ach! Heaven! In these islands man is amphibious and carnivorous. It rains every day and meat, meat, meat is the only human idea of food. God bless us, one acre of the Sandhills is worth a vast estate of tin mines and golf links to feed the innards of

Yours affectionately,
W. H. P.

To Ralph W. Page

Tregenna Castle Hotel,
St. Ives, Cornwall,
March 12, 1918.

My dear Ralph:

Arthur has sent me Gardiner's thirty-seven-page sketch of American-British Concords and Discords—a remarkable sketch; and he has reminded me that your summer plan is to elaborate (into a popular style) your sketch of the same subject. You and Gardiner went over the same ground, each in a very good fashion. That's a fascinating task, and it opens up a wholly new vista of our History and of Anglo-Saxon, democratic history. Much lies ahead of that.

And all this puts it in my mind to write you a little discourse on *style*. Gardiner has no style. He put his facts down much as he would have noted on a blue print the facts about an engineering project that he sketched. The style of your article, which has much to be said for it as a magazine article, is not the best style for a book.

Now, this whole question of style—well, it's the gist of good writing. There's no really effective writing without it. Especially is this true of historical writing. Look at X Y Z's writings. He knows his

American history and has written much on it. He's written it as an Ohio blacksmith shoes a horse—not a touch of literary value in it all; all dry as dust—as dry as old Bancroft.

Style is good breeding—and art—in writing. It consists of the arrangement of your matter, first; then, more, of the gait; the manner and the manners of your expressing it. Work every group of facts, naturally and logically grouped to begin with, into a climax. Work every group up as a sculptor works out his idea or a painter, each group complete in itself. Throw out any superfluous facts or any merely minor facts that prevent the orderly working up of the group—that prevent or mar the effect you wish to present.

Then, when you've got a group thus presented, go over what you've made of it, to make sure you've used your material and its arrangement to the best effect, taking away merely extraneous or superfluous or distracting facts, here and there adding concrete illustrations—putting in a convincing detail here, and there a touch of color.

Then go over it for your vocabulary. See that you use no word in a different meaning than it was used 100 years ago and will be used 100 years hence. You wish to use only the permanent words—words, too, that will be understood to carry the same meaning to English readers in every part of the world. Your vocabulary must be chosen from the permanent, solid, stable parts of the language.

Then see that no sentence contains a hint of obscurity.

Then go over the words you use to see if they be the best. Don't fall into merely current phrases. If you have a long word, see if a native short one can be put in its place which will be more natural and stronger.

Avoid a Latin vocabulary and use a plain English one—short words instead of long ones.

Most of all, use *idioms*—English idioms of force. Say an agreement was "come to." Don't say it was "consummated." For the difference between idioms and a Latin style, compare Lincoln with George Washington. One's always interesting and convincing. The other is dull in spite of all his good sense. How most folk do misuse and waste words!

Freeman went too far in his use of one-syllable words. It became an affectation. But he is the only man I can think of that ever did go too far in that direction. X—— would have written a great history if he had had the natural use of idioms. As it is, he has good sense and no style; and his book isn't half so interesting as it would have been if he had some style—some proper value of short, clear-cut words that mean only one thing and that leave no vagueness.

You'll get a good style if you practice it. It is in your blood and temperament and way of saying things. But it's a high art and must be laboriously cultivated.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. P.

A glimpse of a changing and chastened England appears in a letter of this period:

The disposition shown by an endless number of such incidents is something more than a disposition of gratitude of a people helped when they are hard pressed. All these things show the changed and changing Englishman. It has already come to him that he may be weaker than he had thought himself and that he may need friends more than he had once imagined; and, if he must have helpers and friends,

he'd rather have his own kinsmen. He's a queer "cuss," this Englishman. But he isn't a liar nor a coward nor any sort of a "yellow dog." He's true, and he never runs—a possible hero any day, and, when heroic, modest and quiet and graceful. The trouble with him has been that he got great world power too easily. In the times when he exploited the world for his own enrichment, there were no other successful exploiters. It became an easy game to him. He organized sea traffic and sea power. Of course he became rich—far, far richer than anybody else, and, therefore, content with himself. He has, therefore, kept much of his medieval impedimenta, his dukes and marquesses and all that they imply—his outworn ceremonies and his medieval disregard of his social inferiors. Nothing is well done in this Kingdom for the big public, but only for the classes. The railway stations have no warm waiting rooms. The people pace the platform till the train comes, and milord sits snugly wrapt up in his carriage till his footman announces the approach of the train. And occasionally discontent is relieved by emigration to the Colonies. If any man becomes weary of his restrictions he may go to Australia and become a gentleman. The remarkable loyalty of the Colonies has in it something of a servant's devotion to his old master.

Now this trying time of war and the threat and danger of extinction are bringing—have in fact already brought—the conviction that many changes must come. The first sensible talk about popular education ever heard here is just now beginning. Many a gentleman has made up his mind to try to do with fewer than seventeen servants for the rest of his life since he now *has* to do with less. Privilege, on which so large a part of life here rests, is already pretty well shot to pieces.

A lot of old baggage will never be recovered after this war: that's certain. During a little after-dinner speech in a club not long ago I indulged in a pleasantry about excessive impedimenta. Lord Derby, Minister of War and a bluff and honest aristocrat, sat near me and he whispered to me—"That's me." "Yes," I said, "that's you," and the group about us made merry at the jest. The meaning of this is, they now joke about what was the most solemn thing in life three years ago.

. . . . . .

It is this steadfastness in them that gives me sound hope for the future. They don't forget sympathy or help or friendship. Our going into the war has eliminated the Japanese question. It has shifted the virtual control of the world to English-speaking peoples. It will bring into the best European minds the American ideal of service. It will, in fact, give us the lead and make the English in the long run our willing followers and allies. I don't mean that we shall always have plain sailing. But I do mean that the direction of events for the next fifty or one hundred years has now been determined.

To Frank L. Polk

London, March 22, 1918.

DEAR MR. POLK:

You are good enough to mention the fact that the Embassy has some sort of grievance against the Department. Of course it has, and you are, possibly, the only man that can remove it. It is this: You don't come here to see the war and this government and these people who are again saving the world as we are now saving them. I thank Heaven and the Administration

for Secretary Baker's visit. It is a dramatic moment in the history of the race, of democracy, and of the world. The State Department has the duty to deal with foreign affairs—the especial duty—and yet no man in the State Department has been here since the war began. This doesn't look pretty and it won't look pretty when the much over-worked "future historian" writes it down in a book. Remove that grievance.

The most interesting thing going on in the world to-day—a thing that in History will transcend the war and be reckoned its greatest gain—is the high leadership of the President in formulating the struggle, in putting its aims high, and in taking the democratic lead in the world, a lead that will make the world over—and in taking the democratic lead of the English-speaking folk. Next most impressive to that is to watch the British response to that lead. Already they have doubled the number of their voters, and even more important definite steps in Democracy will be taken. My aim—and it's the only way to save the world—is to lead the British in this direction. They are the most easily teachable people in our way of thinking and of doing. Of course everybody who works toward such an aim provokes the cry from a lot of fools among us who accuse him of toadying to the English and of "accepting the conventional English conclusion." They had as well talk of missionaries to India accepting Confucius or Buddha. Their fleet has saved us four or five times. It's about time we were saving them from this bloody Thing that we call Europe, for our sake and for theirs.

The bloody Thing will get us all if we don't fight our level best; and it's only by *our* help that we'll be saved. That clearly gives us the leadership. Everybody sees that. Everybody acknowledges it. The President

authoritatively speaks it—speaks leadership on a higher level than it was ever spoken before to the whole world. As soon as we get this fighting job over, the world procession toward freedom—our kind of freedom—will begin under our lead. This being so, can't you delegate the writing of telegrams about "facilitating the license to ship poppy seed to McKesson and Robbins," and come over and see big world forces at work?

I cannot express my satisfaction at Secretary Baker's visit. It was historic—the first member of the Cabinet, I think, who ever came here while he held office. He made a great impression and received a hearty welcome.

That's the only grievance I can at the moment unload on you. We're passing out of our old era of isolation. These benighted heathen on this island whom we'll yet save (since they are well worth saving) will be with us as we need them in future years and centuries. Come, help us heighten this fine spirit.

Always heartily yours,

WALTER HINES PAGE.

P. S. You'd see how big our country looks from a distance. It's gigantic, I assure you.

The above letter was written on what was perhaps the darkest day of the whole war. The German attack on the Western Front, which had been long expected, had now been launched, and, at the moment that Page was penning this cheery note to Mr. Polk, the German armies had broken through the British defenses, had pushed their lines forty miles ahead, and, in the judgment of many military men, had Paris almost certainly within their grasp. A great Ger-

man gun, placed about seventy miles from the French capital, was dropping shells upon the apparently doomed city. This attack had been regarded as inevitable since the collapse of Russia, which had enabled the Germans to concentrate practically all their armies on the Western Front.

The world does not yet fully comprehend the devastating effect of this apparently successful attack upon the allied morale. British statesmen and British soldiers made no attempt to conceal from official Americans the desperate state of affairs. It was the expectation that the Germans might reach Calais and thence invade England. The War Office discussed these probabilities most freely with Colonel Slocum, the American military attaché. The simple fact was that both the French and the British armies were practically bled white.

"For God's sake, get your men over!" they urged General Slocum. "You have got to finish it."

Page was writing urgently to President Wilson to the same purpose. Send the men and send them at once. "I pray God," were his solemn words to Mr. Wilson, "that you will not be too late!"

One propitious event had taken place at the same time as the opening of the great German offensive. Mr. Newton D. Baker, the American Secretary of War, had left quietly for France in late February, 1918, and had reached the Western Front in time to obtain a first-hand sight of the great March drive. No visit in history has ever been better timed, and no event could have better played into Page's hands. He had been urging Washington to send all available forces to France at the earliest possible date; he knew, as probably few other men knew, the extent to which the Allies were depending upon American

troops to give the final blow to Germany; and the arrival of Secretary Baker at the scene of action gave him the opportunity to make a personal appeal.

Page immediately communicated with the Secretary and persuaded him to come at once to London for a consultation with British military and political leaders. The Secretary spent only three days in London, but the visit, brief as it was, had historic consequences. He had many consultations with the British military men; he entered into their plans with enthusiasm; he himself received many ideas that afterward took shape in action, and the British Government obtained from him first-hand information as to the progress of the American Army and the American determination to coöperate to the last man and the last dollar. "Baker went straight back to France," Page wrote to his son Arthur, "and our whole coöperation began."

Page gave a dinner to Mr. Baker at the Embassy on March 23rd—two days after the great March drive had begun. This occasion gave the visitor a memorable glimpse of the British temperament. Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, Lord Derby, the War Secretary, General Biddle of the United States Army, and Admiral Sims were the Ambassador's guests. Though the mighty issues then overhanging the world were not ignored in the conversation the atmosphere hardly suggested that the existence of the British Empire, indeed that of civilization itself, was that very night hanging in the balance. Possibly it was the general somberness of events that caused these British statesmen to find a certain relief in jocular small talk and reminiscence. For the larger part of the evening not a word was said about the progress of the German armies in France.

The whole talk was lively and bantering, and accompanied with much laughter; and all this time shells from that long-distance gun were dropping at fifteen minute intervals upon the devoted women and children of Paris and the Germans were every hour driving the British back in disorder. At times the conversation took a more philosophic turn. Would the men present like to go back twenty-five years and live their lives all over again? The practically unanimous decision of every man was that he would not wish to do so.

All this, of course, was merely on the surface; despite the laughter and the banter, there was only one thing which engrossed the Ambassador's guests, although there were not many references to it. That was the struggle which was then taking place in France. At intervals Mr. Lloyd George would send one of the guests, evidently a secretary, from the room. The latter, on his return, would whisper something in the Prime Minister's ear, but more frequently he would merely shake his head. Evidently he had been sent to obtain the latest news of the battle.

At one point the Prime Minister did refer to the great things taking place in France.

"This battle means one thing," he said. "That is a generalissimo."

"Why couldn't you have taken this step long ago?" Admiral Sims asked Mr. Lloyd George.

The answer came like a flash.

"If the Cabinet two weeks ago had suggested placing the British Army under a foreign general, it would have fallen. Every cabinet in Europe would also have fallen, had it suggested such a thing."

Memorandum of Secretary Baker's Visit

I have on my mantelpiece a statuette of Benjamin Franklin, an excellent and unmistakable likeness which was made here during his lifetime; and the inscription burnt on its base is *Geo. Washington.* It serves me many a good turn with my English friends. I use it as a measure of their ignorance of us. Of course this is a mere little error of a statuette-maker, an error, moreover, of a hundred years ago. But it tells the story of to-day also. If I had to name the largest and most indelible impression that has been made on me during my five years' work here, I should say the ignorance and aloofness of the two peoples—not an ignorance of big essential facts but of personalities and temperaments—such as never occur except between men who had never seen one another.

But I was writing about Mr. Baker's visit and I've got a long way from that. I doubt if he knows himself what gratification it gave; for these men here have spoken to me about it as they could not speak to him.

Here is an odd fact: For sixty years, so far as I know, members of the Administration have had personal acquaintance with some of the men in power in Salvador, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Peru, etc., etc., and members of the British Government have had personal acquaintance with some men in authority in Portugal, Serbia, Montenegro and Monte Carlo; but during this time (with the single exception of John Hay) I think no member of any Administration had a real personal acquaintance while he held office with any member of the British Government while he held office, and vice versa—till Mr. Balfour's visit. Suspicion grows out of ignorance.

The longer I live here the more astonished I become at the fundamental ignorance of the British about us and of our fundamental ignorance about them. So colossal is this ignorance that every American sent here is supposed to be taken in, to become Anglophile; and often when one undertakes to enlighten Englishmen about the United States one becomes aware of a feeling inside the English of unbelief, as if he said, "Oh, well! you are one of those queer people who believe in republican government."

All this is simply amazing. Poor Admiral Sims sometimes has a sort of mania, a delusion that nobody at Washington trusts his judgment because he said seven or eight years ago that he liked the English. Yet every naval officer who comes here, I understand, shares his views about practically every important naval problem or question. I don't deserve the compliment (it's a very high one) that some of my secretaries sometimes pay me when they say that I am the only man they know who tries to tell the whole truth to our government in favor of the Englishman as well as against him. It is certain that American public opinion is universally supposed to suspect any American who tries to do anything with the British lion except to twist his tail—a supposition that I never believed to be true.—But it is true that the mutual ignorance is as high as the Andes and as deep as the ocean. Personal acquaintance removes it and nothing else will.

To Ralph W. Page

London, April 7, 1918.

DEAR RALPH:

There used to be a country parson down in Wake County who, when other subjects were talked out,

always took up the pleasing topic of saving your soul. That's the way your mother and I do—with the subject of going home. We talk over the battle, we talk over the boys, we talk over military and naval problems, we discuss the weather and all the babies, and then take up politics, and talk over the gossip of the wiseacres; but we seldom finish a conversation without discussing going home. And we reach just about as clear a conclusion on our topic as the country parson reached on his. I've had the doctors going over me (or rather your mother has) as an expert accountant goes over your books; and I tried to bribe them to say that I oughtn't to continue my arduous duties here longer. They wouldn't say any such thing. Thus that device failed—dead. It looks as if I were destined for a green old age and no martyr business at all.

All this is disappointing; and I don't see what to do but to go on. I can't keep from hoping that the big battle may throw some light on the subject; but there's no telling when the big battle will end. Nothing ends —that's the trouble. I sometimes feel that the war may never end, that it may last as the Napoleonic Wars did, for 20 years; and before that time we'll all have guns that shoot 100 miles. We can stay at home and indefinitely bombard the enemy across the Rhine—have an endless battle at long range.

So, we stick to it, and give the peach trees time to grow up.

We had a big day in London yesterday—the anniversary of our entry into the war. I send you some newspaper clippings about it.

The next best news is that we have a little actual

sunshine—a very rare thing—and some of the weather is now almost decent. . . .

Affectionately,
W. H. P.

To Ralph W. Page

London, April 13, 1918.

DEAR RALPH:

We haven't any news here, and I send you my weekly note only to keep my record clear. The great battle—no one talks or thinks of anything else. We have suffered and still suffer a good deal of fear and anxiety, with real reason, too. But the military men are reassuring. Yet I don't know just how far to trust their judgment or to share their hopes. Certainly this is the most dangerous situation that modern civilization was ever put in. If we can keep them from winning any *great* objective, like Paris or a Channel port, we ought to end the war this year. If not, either they win or at the least prolong the war indefinitely. It's a hazardous and trying time.

There were never such casualties on either side as now. Such a bloody business cannot keep up all summer. But before everybody is killed or a decisive conclusion is reached, the armies will, no doubt, dig themselves in and take a period of comparative rest. People here see and feel the great danger. But the extra effort now *may* come too late. Still we keep up good hope. The British are hard to whip. They never give up. And as for the French army, I always remember Verdun and keep my courage up.

The wounded are coming over by the thousand. We are incomparably busy and in great anxiety about the result (though still pretty firm in the belief that the Germans will lose), and luckily we keep very well.

Affectionately,

W. H. P.

CHAPTER XVII

LAST DAYS

EVERYTHING was not well with Page. All through the winter of 1917–1918 his associates at the Embassy had noticed a change for the worse in his health. He seemed to be growing thinner; his face was daily becoming more haggard; he tired easily, and, after walking the short distance from his house to his Embassy, he would drop listlessly into his chair. His general bearing was that of a man who was physically and nervously exhausted. It was hoped that the holiday at St. Ives would help him; he greatly enjoyed that visit, especially the westward—homeward—outlook on the Atlantic which it gave him; there was a temporary improvement also in his health, but only a temporary one.

Page's last few months in England, though full of sad memories for his friends, contained little but satisfaction for himself. He still spent many a lonely evening by his fire, but his thoughts were now far more pleasurable than in the old *Lusitania* days. The one absorbing subject of contemplation now was that America was "in." His country had justified his deep confidence. The American Navy had played a determining part in defeating the submarine, and American shipyards were turning out merchant ships faster than the Germans were destroying them. American troops were reaching France at a rate which necessarily meant the early collapse of the German Empire.

Page's own family had responded to the call and this in itself was a cause of great contentment to a sick and weary man. The Ambassador's youngest son, Frank, had obtained a commission and was serving in France; his son-in-law, Charles G. Loring, was also on the Western Front; while from North Carolina Page's youngest brother Frank and two nephews had sailed for the open battle line. The bravery and success of the American troops did not surprise the Ambassador but they made his last days in England very happy.

Indeed, every day had some delightful experience for Page. The performance of the Americans at Cantigny especially cheered him. The day after this battle he and Mrs. Page entertained Mr. Lloyd George and other guests at lunch. The Prime Minister came bounding into the room with his characteristic enthusiasm, rushed up to Mrs. Page with both hands outstretched and shook hands joyously.

"Congratulations!" he exclaimed. "The Americans have done it! They have met the Prussian guard and defeated them!"

Mr. Lloyd George was as exuberant over the achievement as a child.

This was now the kind of experience that had become Page's daily routine. Lively as were his spirits, however, his physical frame was giving way. In fact, Page, though he did not know it at the time, was suffering from a specific disease—nephritis; and its course, after Christmas of 1917, became rapid. His old friend, Dr. Wallace Buttrick, had noted the change for the worse and had attempted to persuade him to go home.

"Quit your job, Page," he urged. "You have other big tasks waiting you at home. Why don't you go back?"

"No—no—not now."

"But, Page," urged Dr. Buttrick, "you are going to lay down your life."

"I have only one life to lay down," was the reply. "I can't quit now."

To Mary E. Page [1]

London, May 12, 1918.

DEAR MARY:

You'll have to take this big paper and this paint-brush pen—it's all the pen these blunt British have. This is to tell you how very welcome your letter to Alice is—how *very* welcome, for nobody writes us the family news and nothing is so much appreciated. I'll try to call the shorter roll of us in the same way:

After a miserable winter we, too, are having the rare experience of a little sunshine in this dark, damp world of London. The constant confinement in the city and *in the house* (that's the worst of it—no out-door life or fresh air) has played hob with my digestion. It's not bad, but it's troublesome, and for some time I've had the feeling of being one half well. It occurred to me the other day that I hadn't had leave from my work for four years, except my short visit home nearly two years ago. I asked for two months off, and I've got it. We are going down by the shore where there is fresh air and where I can live outdoors and get some exercise. We have a house that we can get there and be comfortable. To get away from London when the weather promises to be good, and to get away from people seemed a joyous prospect.

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[1] Of Aberdeen, N. C., the Ambassador's sister.

I can, at any time I must, come to London in two hours.

The job's too important to give up at this juncture. This, then, is the way we can keep it going. I've no such hard task now as I had during the years of our neutrality, which, praise God! I somehow survived, though I am now suffering more or less from the physical effects of that strain. Yet, since I have had the good fortune to win the confidence of this Government and these people, I feel that I ought to keep on now until some more or less natural time to change comes.

. . . . . .

Yesterday a regiment of our National Army marched through the streets of London and were reviewed by the King and me; and the town made a great day of it. While there is an undercurrent of complaint in certain sections of English opinion because we didn't come into the war sooner, there is a very general and very genuine appreciation of everything we have done and of all that we do. Nothing could be heartier than the welcome given our men here yesterday. Nor could any men have made a braver or better showing than they made. They made us all swell with pride.

They are coming over now, as you know, in great quantities. There were about 8,000 landed here last week and about 30,000 more are expected this week. I think that many more go direct to France than come through England. On their way through England they do not come to London. Only twice have we had them here, yesterday and one day last summer when we had a parade of a regiment of engineers. For the *army* London is on a sidetrack—is an out of the way place. For our navy, of course, it's the

European headquarters, since Admiral Sims has his headquarters here. We thus see a good many of our sailors who are allowed to come to London on leave. A few days ago I had a talk with a little bunch of them who came from one of our superdreadnaughts in the North Sea. They had just returned from a patrol across to the coast of Norway. "Bad luck, bad luck," they said, "on none of our long patrol trips have we seen a single Hun ship!"

One sad thing is certain: we shall at once begin to have heavy American casualties. Our Red Cross and our army here are getting hospitals ready for such American wounded as are brought over to England—the parts of our army that are fighting with the British.

. . . . . .

The Embassy now is a good deal bigger than the whole State Department ever was in times of peace. I have three buildings for offices, and a part of our civil force occupies two other buildings. Even a general supervision of so large a force is in itself a pretty big job. The army and the navy have each about the same space as the Embassy proper. Besides, our people have huts and inns and clubs and hospitals all over the town. Even though there be fewer vexing problems than there were while we were neutral, there is not less work—on the contrary, more. Nor will there be an end to it for a very long time—long after my time here. The settling of the war and the beginning of peace activities, whenever these come, will involve a great volume of work. But I've no ambition to have these things in hand. As soon as a natural time of relief shall come, I'll go and be happier in my going than you or anybody else can guess.

Now we go to get my digestion stiffened up for another long tug—unless the Germans proceed forthwith to knock us out—which they cannot do.

With my love to everybody on the Hill,

Affectionately yours,

W. H. P.

Mr. and Mrs. Waldorf Astor—since become Viscount and Viscountess Astor—had offered the Pages the use of their beautiful seaside house at Sandwich, Kent, and it was the proposed vacation here to which Page refers in this letter. He obtained a six weeks' leave of absence and almost the last letters which he wrote from England are dated from this place. These letters have all the qualities of Page at his best; but the handwriting is a sad reminder of the change that was progressively taking place in his physical condition. It is still a clear and beautiful script, but there are signs of a less steady hand than the one that had written the vigorous papers of the preceding four years.

Memorandum

Sandwich, Kent, Sunday, 19 May, 1918.

We're at Rest Harrow and it's a fine, sunny early spring Carolina day. The big German drive has evidently begun its second phase. We hear the guns distinctly. We see the coast-guard aëroplanes at almost any time o' day. What is the mood about the big battle?

The soldiers—British and French—have confidence in their ability to hold the Germans back from the Channel and from Paris. Yet can one rely on the

judgment of soldiers? They have the job in hand and of course they believe in themselves. While one does not like in the least to discount their judgment and their hopefulness, for my part I am not *quite* so sure of their ability to make sound judgments as I wish I were. The chances are in favor of their success; but—suppose they should have to yield and give up Calais and other Channel ports? Well, they've prepared for it as best they can. They have made provision for commandeering most of the hotels in London that are not yet taken over—for hospitals for the wounded now in France.

And the war would take on a new phase. Whatever should become of the British and American armies, the Germans would be no nearer having England than they now are. They would not have command of the sea. The combined British and American fleets could keep every German ship off the ocean and continue the blockade by sea—indefinitely; and, if the peoples of the two countries hold fast, a victory would be won at last—at sea.

To Ralph W. Page

Rest Harrow, Sandwich, Kent.
May 19, 1918.

DEAR RALPH:

. . . All your life and all my life, we have cultivated the opinion at home that we had nothing to do with the rest of the world, nothing to do with Europe in particular—and in our political life our hayseed spokesmen have said this over and over again till many people, perhaps most people, came really to believe that it was true. Now this aloofness, this utterly detached attitude, was a pure invention of the

shirt-sleeve statesman at home. I have long concluded, for other reasons as well as for this, that these men are the most ignorant men in the whole world; more ignorant—because they are viciously ignorant—than the Negro boys who act as caddies at Pinehurst; more ignorant than the inmates of the Morganton Asylum; more ignorant than sheep or rabbits or idiots. They have been the chief hindrances of our country—worse than traitors, in effect. It is they, in fact, who kept our people ignorant of the Germans, ignorant of the English, ignorant of our own history, ignorant of ourselves. Now your book, without mentioning the subject, shows this important fact clearly, by showing that our aloofness has all been a fiction. *We've been in the world—and right in the middle of the world—the whole time.*

And our public consciousness of this fact has enormously slipped back. Take Franklin, Madison, Monroe, Jefferson; take Hay, Root—and then consider some of our present representatives! One good result of the war and of our being in it will be the restoration of our foreign consciousness. Every one of the half million, or three million, soldiers who go to France will know more about foreign affairs than all Congress knew two years ago.

A stay of nearly five years in London (five years ago to-day I was on the ship coming here) with no absence long enough to give any real rest, have got my digestion wrong. I've therefore got a real leave for two months. Your mother and I have a beautiful house here that has been lent to us, right on the Channel where there's nothing worth bombing and where as much sunshine and warmth come as come anywhere in England. We got here last night and to-day is as fine an early spring day as you ever had

in the Sandhills. I shall golf and try to find me an old horse to ride, and I'll stay out in the sunshine and try to get the inside machinery going all right. We may have a few interruptions, but I hope not many, if the Germans leave us alone. Your mother has got to go to Newcastle to christen a new British warship —a compliment the Admiralty pays her "to bind the two nations closer together," etc., etc. And I've got to go to Cambridge to receive an LL.D. for the President. Only such things are allowed to interrupt us. And we are very much hoping to see Frank here.

We are in sound of the battle. We hear the big guns whenever we go outdoors. A few miles down the beach is a rifle range and we hear the practice there. Almost any time of day we can hear aëroplanes which (I presume) belong to the coast guard. There's no danger of forgetting the war, therefore, unless we become stone deaf. But this decent air and sunshine are blessings of the highest kind. I never became so tired of anything since I had the measles as I've become of London.

My Lord! it sounded last night as if we had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. Just as we were about to go to bed the big gun on the beach—just outside the fence around our yard—about fifty yards from the house, began its thundering belch—five times in quick succession, rattling the windows and shaking the very foundation of things. Then after a pause of a few minutes, another round of five shots. Then the other guns all along the beach took up the chorus—farther off—and the inland guns followed. They are planted all the way to London—ninety miles. For about two hours we had this roar and racket.

There was an air raid on, and there were supposed to be twenty-five or thirty German planes on their way

to London. I hear that it was the worst raid that London has had. Two of them were brought down —that's the only good piece of news I've heard about it. Well, we are not supposed to be in danger. They fly over us on the way to bigger game. At any rate, I'll take the risk for this air and sunshine. Trenches and barbed wire run all along the beach—I suppose to help in case of an invasion. But an invasion is impossible in my judgment. Holy Moses! what a world!—the cannon in the big battle in France roaring in our ears all the time, this cannon at our door likely to begin action any night and all the rest along the beach and on the way to London, and this is what we call rest! The world is upside down, all crazy, all murderous; but we've got to stop this barbaric assault, whatever the cost.

Ray Stannard Baker is spending a few days with us, much to our pleasure.

With love to Leila and the babies,

Yours affectionately,

W. H. P.

To the President

Sandwich, May 24, 1918.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

Your speeches have a cumulative effect in cheering up the British. As you see, if you look over the mass of newspaper clippings that I send to the Department, or have them looked over, the British press of all parties and shades of opinion constantly quote them approvingly and gratefully. They have a cumulative effect, too, in clearing the atmosphere. Take, for instance, your declaration in New York about standing by Russia. All the Allied governments in Europe

wish to stand by Russia, but their pressing business with the war, near at hand, causes them in a way to forget Russia; and certainly the British public, all intent on the German "drive" in France had in a sense forgotten Russia. You woke them up. And your "Why set a limit to the American Army?" has had a cheering effect. As leader and spokesman of the enemies of Germany—by far the best trumpet-call spokesman and the strongest leader—your speeches are worth an army in France and more, for they keep the proper moral elevation. All this is gratefully recognized here. Public opinion toward us is wholesome and you have a "good press" in this Kingdom. In this larger matter, all is well. The English faults are the failings of the smaller men—about smaller matters—not of the large men nor of the public, about large matters.

In private, too, thoughtful Englishmen by their fears pay us high tribute. I hear more and more constantly such an opinion as this: "You see, when the war is over, you Americans will have much the largest merchant fleet. You will have much the largest share of money, and England and France and all the rest of the world will owe you money. You will have a large share of essential raw materials. You will have the machinery for marine insurance and for foreign banking. You will have much the largest volume of productive labor. And you will know the world as you have never known it before. What then is going to become of the British trade?"

The best answer I can give is: "Adopt American methods of manufacture, and the devil take the hindmost. There will be for a long time plenty for everybody to do; and let us make sure that we both play the game fairly: that's the chief matter to look out

for." That's what I most fear in the decades following the end of the war—trade clashes.

The Englishman's pride will be hurt. I recall a speech made to me by the friendliest of the British—Mr. Balfour himself: "I confess that as an Englishman it hurts my pride to have to borrow so much even from you. But I will say that I'd rather be in your debt than in anybody else's."

The last piece of writing from Sandwich is the following memorandum:

Sandwich, Kent,
June 10, 1918.

The Germans continue to gain ground in France—more slowly, but still they gain. The French and British papers now give space to plans for the final defense—the desperate defense—of Paris. The Germans are only forty miles away. Slocum, military attaché, thinks they will get it and he reports the same opinion at the War Office—because the Germans have taken such a large number of guns and so much ammunition. Some of these guns were meant for the American troops, and they cannot now be replaced in time if the German advance continues. But I do not know enough facts at first hand to form an opinion. But, if Paris be taken, the war will go on a long time—unless the English-speaking rulers make a compromise. And, then, in another form—and forms—it'll go on indefinitely.—There has been no more perilous or uncertain or anxious time than now.

The United States too late, too late, too late: what if it should turn out so?

But it did not turn out so. Even while Page was

penning these lines great events were taking place in France and the American troops were having a large share in them. In June the Americans stopped the German troops at Belleau Wood—a battle which proved the mettle of these fresh levies not only for the benefit of the Germans but of the Allies as well. Thus Page had the great satisfaction of returning to London while the city was ringing with the praise of these achievements. He found that the atmosphere had materially changed since he had last been in the British capital; when he had left for Sandwich there had been a general expectation that the Germans would get Paris or the Channel ports; now, however, there was every confidence of victory.

Greatly as Page rejoiced over the new prospect, however, the fight at Belleau Wood brought him his last great sorrow. His nephew, Allison M. Page, of Aberdeen, North Carolina, the son of his youngest brother, Frank, lost his life in that engagement. At first the young man was reported "missing"; the investigation set afoot by the Ambassador for some time brought no definite information. One of the most pathetic of Page's papers is a brief note addressed by him to Allison Page, asking him for news: "It's been a long time since we heard from you," Page wrote his nephew. "Write how it goes with you. Affectionately, Uncle Wat." After traveling over a considerable part of France, this note found its way back to the Embassy. The boy—he was only nineteen—had been killed in action near Belleau Wood, on June 25th, while leading his detachment in an attack on a machine gun. Citations and decorations for gallantry in action were given posthumously by General Pershing, Marshal Pétain, Major-General Omar Bundy, and Major-General John A. LeJeune.

And now the shadows began to close in rapidly on Page. In early July Major Frank C. Page, the Ambassador's youngest son, came over from France. A brief glance at his father convinced him that he was dying. By this time the Ambassador had ceased to go to the Chancery, but was transacting the most imperative business propped up in a chair at home. His mind was possessed by two yearnings: one was to remain in London until the end of the war, the other was to get back to his childhood home in North Carolina. Young Page urged his father to resign, but the weary invalid insisted on sticking to his post. On this point it seemed impossible to move him. Knowing that his brother Arthur had great influence with his father, Frank Page cabled, asking him to come to England immediately. Arthur took the first boat, reaching London late in July.

The Ambassador's two sons then gently pressed upon their father the fact that he must resign. Weak as he was, the Ambassador was still obdurate.

"No," he said. "It's quitting on the job. I must see the war through. I can't quit until it's over."

But Sir William Osler, Page's physician and devoted friend, exercised his professional authority and insisted on the resignation. Finally Page consented.

To the President

American Embassy, London,
August 1, 1918.

My dear Mr. President:

I have been struggling for a number of months against the necessity to write you this note; for my

doctors now advise me to give up all work for a period —my London doctor says for six months. I have a progressive digestive trouble which does not yield to the usual treatment. It's the war, five London winters, and the unceasing labor which is now the common lot. I am ashamed to say that these have brought me to something near a breakdown. I have had Sir William Osler as well as two distinguished London physicians for several months. The digestive trouble has brought other ills in its train; and I am assured that they will yield to freedom from responsibility and complete rest for a time in a dry, warm climate and that they are not likely to yield to anything else.

I see nothing else to do then but to bow to the inevitable and to ask you to be kind enough to relieve me and to accept my resignation to take effect as soon as I can go to Washington and make a somewhat extended report on the work here, which, I hope, will be of some use to the Department; and I ought to go as soon as possible—say, in September. I cannot tell you how great my disappointment is that this request has become necessary.

. . . . . .

I send this, Mr. President, with more regret than I can express and only after a struggle of more than six months to avoid it.

Yours sincerely,

WALTER H. PAGE.

Arthur Page took his father to Banff, in Scotland, for a little rest in preparation for the voyage. From this place came Page's last letter to his wife:

To Mrs. Page

Duff House, Banff, Scotland.
Sunday, September 2, 1918.

MY DEAR:

. . . I've put the period of our life in London, in my mind, as closed. That epoch is ended. And I am glad. It was time it ended. My job (*that* job) is done. From the letters that Shoecraft has sent me and from what the papers say, I think I couldn't have ended it more happily—or at a better time. I find myself thinking of the winter down South—of a Thanksgiving Day dinner for the older folks of our family, of a Christmas tree for the kids, of frolics of all sorts, of Rest, of some writing (perhaps not much), going over my papers with Ralph—that's what he wants, you know; etc., etc., etc.——

And I've got to eat more. *I* myself come into my thinking and planning in only two ways—(1) I'm going to have a suit like old Lord N.'s and (2) I'm going to get all the good things to eat that there are!

Meantime, my dear, how are you? Don't you let this getting ready wear you out. Let something go undone rather. Work Miss Latimer and the boys and the moving and packing men, and Petherick and the servants. Take it very easy yourself.

Nine and a half more days here—may they speed swiftly. Comfortable as I am, I'm mortal tired of being away from you—dead tired.

Praise God it's only 9½ days. If it were 9¾, I should not stand it, but break for home prematurely.

Yours, dear Allie, with all my love,

W. H. P.

On August 24th came the President's reply:

I have received your communication of August 1st. It caused me great regret that the condition of your health makes it necessary for you to resign. Under the circumstances I do not feel I have the right to insist on such a sacrifice as your remaining in London. Your resignation is therefore accepted. As you request it will take effect when you report to Washington. Accept my congratulations that you have no reason to fear a permanent impairment of your health and that you can resign knowing that you have performed your difficult duties with distinguished success.

WOODROW WILSON.

The news of Page's resignation inspired tributes from the British press and from British public men such as have been bestowed upon few Americans. The London *Times* headed its leader "A Great Ambassador" and this note was echoed in all sections of Great Britain.

From the King

The information communicated to me yesterday through Mr. Laughlin of Your Excellency's resignation of the Post of Ambassador and the cause of this step fill me with the keenest regret. During your term of office in days of peace and of war your influence has done much to strengthen the ties of friendship and good will which unite the two English-speaking nations of the world. I trust your health will soon be restored and that we may have the pleasure of seeing you and Mrs. Page before your departure.

GEORGE R. I.

From the Prime Minister

10, Downing Street, Whitehall, S. W. 1.
30th August, 1918.

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR:

It is with the deepest regret that my colleagues and I have received the news that you have been forced by ill health to resign your office and that the President has consented to your relinquishing your ambassadorial duties. We are sorry that you are leaving us, all the more because your tenure of office has coincided with one of the greatest epochs in the history of our two countries and of the world, and because your influence and counsel throughout this difficult time have been of the utmost value to us all.

The power for good or evil which can be exerted by the occupant of your high position is at all times necessarily very great. That our peoples are now fighting side by side in the cause of human freedom and that they are manifesting an ever growing feeling of cordiality to one another is largely attributable to the exceptional wisdom and good will with which you have discharged your duties. For the part you have played during the past five years in bringing about this happy result we owe you our lasting gratitude.

May I add that while you have always firmly presented the point of view of your own country, you have succeeded in winning, not only the respect and admiration of official circles, but the confidence, and I can say without hesitation, the affection of all sections of our people? It will be with universal regret that they will learn that, owing to the strain of the great responsibilities you have borne, you are no longer to remain among us. I earnestly trust that a well-earned rest will speedily restore you to complete health, and that

you have many years of public service still in store for you.

I should like also to say how much we shall miss Mrs. Page. She has won a real place in all our hearts. Through her unfailing tact, her genuine kindliness, and her unvarying readiness to respond to any call upon her time and energy, she has greatly contributed to the success of your ambassadorship.

Ever sincerely,

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

From Viscount Grey of Fallodon

Glen Innerleithen, Scotland.
September 2, 1918.

DEAR MR. PAGE:

I have been out of touch with current events for a few days, but yesterday I read the two articles in the *Times* on your retirement. I am very grieved to think that you are going. There was not a word of eulogy in the *Times* articles that was not under rather than over-stated, and reflecting thus I thought how rare it is in public life to have an occasion that justifies the best that can be said. But it is so now, and I am filled with deep regret that you are going and with deep gratitude that you came to us and were here when the war broke out and subsequently. If the United States had been represented here by anyone less decided as to the right and wrong of the war and less firm and courageous than yourself, the whole of the relations between your country and ours would have been in peril. And if the two countries had gone apart instead of coming together the whole fate of the world would be very different from what I hope it will now be.

I have often thought that the forces behind public affairs are so tremendous that individuals have little real, even when much apparent, influence upon the course of events. But in the early years of the war I think everything might have gone wrong if it had not been that certain men of strong moral conviction were in certain places. And you were preëminently one of these. President Wilson I am sure was another, though I know him only through you and Colonel House and his own public utterances. Even so, your influence must have counted in his action, by your friendship with him as well as by the fact of your being the channel through which communications passed between him and us.

I cannot adequately express what it was to me personally in the dark days of 1914, 1915, and 1916 to know how you felt about the great issues involved in the war.

I go to Fallodon at the end of this week and come to London the first week of September—if you and Mrs. Page have not left by then I hope I may see you. I long to do so before you go. I wish you may recover perfect health. My eyesight continues to fail and I shall soon be absolutely dependent upon other eyes for reading print. Otherwise I feel as well as a schoolboy, but it is depressing to be so well and yet so crippled in sight.

Please do not trouble to answer this letter—you must have too many letters of the kind to be able to reply to them separately—but if there is a chance of my seeing you before you go please let me have a message to say when and where.

Yours sincerely,

GREY OF F.

The seriousness of Page's condition was not understood in London; consequently there were many attempts to do him honor in which he was unable to participate. Custom demands that a retiring Ambassador shall go to Windsor Castle to dine and to sleep; but King George, who was very solicitous about Page's health, offered to spare the Ambassador this trip and to come himself to London for this leave-taking. However, Page insisted on carrying out the usual program; but the visit greatly tired him and he found it impossible personally to take part in any further official farewells.

The last ceremony was a visit from the Lord Mayor and Council of Plymouth, who came to the Ambassador's house in September to present the freedom of the city. Ever since Page's speech of August 4, 1917, Plymouth had been planning to do him this honor; when the Council heard that the Ambassador's health would make it impossible for him to visit Plymouth, they asked if they might not come to London. The proceeding was most impressive and touching and the Ambassador's five-minute speech, the last one which he made in England, had all his old earnestness and mental power, though the physical weakness of the man saddened everybody present. The Lord Mayor presented the freedom of the ancient borough in a temporary holder, explaining that a more permanent receptacle would follow the Ambassador to America. When this arrived, it proved to be a beautiful silver model of the *Mayflower*. Certainly there could have been no more appropriate farewell gift to Page from the English town whose name so closely links the old country with the United States.

The last scene took place at Waterloo Station.

Sir Arthur Walsh came representing the King, while Mr. Balfour, Lord Robert Cecil, and other Ministers represented the Cabinet. The Government had provided a special railway carriage, and this was stationed at a convenient place as Page's motor drew up. So weak was the Ambassador that it was with difficulty that his companions, the ever devoted Mr. Laughlin, on one side, and Page's secretary, Mr. Shoecraft, on the other, succeeded in supporting him to his chair. Mr. Balfour, Lord Robert Cecil, and the others then entered the carriage, and, with all that sympathetic dignity in which Englishmen of this type excel, said a few gracious and affectionate words of good-by. They all stood, with uncovered heads, as the train slowly pulled out of the station, and caught their final glimpse of Page as he smiled at them and faintly waved his hand.

Perhaps the man most affected by this leave-taking was Mr. Balfour. He knew, as did the others, that that frail and emaciated figure had been one of the greatest friends that Britain had had at the most dreadful crisis in her history. He has many times told of this parting scene at Waterloo Station and always with emotion.

"I loved that man," he once said to an American friend, recalling this event. "I almost wept when he left England."

Page came home only to die. In fact, at one time it seemed improbable that he would live to reach the United States. The voyage of the *Olympic,* on which he sailed, was literally a race with death. The great-hearted Captain, Sir Bertram Hayes, hearing of the Ambassador's yearning to reach his North Carolina

home, put the highest pressure upon his ship, which almost leaped through the waves. But for a considerable part of the trip Page was too ill to have much consciousness of his surroundings. At times he was delirious; once more he lived over the long period of "neutrality"; again he was discussing intercepted cargoes and "notes" with Sir Edward Grey; from this his mind would revert to his English literary friends, and then again he was a boy in North Carolina.

The *Olympic* reached New York more than a day ahead of schedule; Page was carried down the gangplank on a stretcher, propped up with pillows; and since he was too weak then to be taken to his Southern home, he was placed temporarily in St. Luke's Hospital. Page arrived on a beautiful sunshiny October day; Fifth Avenue had changed its name in honor of the new Liberty Loan and had become the "Avenue of the Allies"; each block, from Forty-second Street north, was decorated with the colors of one of the nations engaged in the battle against Germany; the street was full of Red Cross workers and other picturesquely clad enthusiasts selling Liberty Bonds; in its animated beauty and in its inspiring significance it formed an appropriate setting for Page's home-coming.

The American air seemed to act like a tonic on Page; in a short time he showed such improvement that his recovery seemed not impossible. So far as his spirits and his mind were concerned, he became his old familiar self. He was able to see several of his old friends, he read the newspapers and discussed the international situation with his customary liveliness. With the assistance of his daughter, Mrs. Loring, he even kept track of his correspondence. Evidently the serious nature of his illness was not understood, for invitations to speak poured in from all quarters. Most

of these letters Mrs. Loring answered, but there was one that Page insisted on attending to himself. The City of Cleveland was organizing some kind of a meeting dedicated to closer relations with Great Britain, and the Mayor wrote Page asking him to speak. The last thing which Page wrote with his own hand was his reply to this invitation; and it is an impressive fact that his final written word should have dealt with the subject that had been so close to his heart for the preceding five years.

To Harry L. Davis, Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio

I deeply regret my health will not permit me to attend any public function for some time to come; for I deeply appreciate your invitation on behalf of the City of Cleveland for the meeting on December 7th, and have a profound sympathy with its purpose to bring the two great English-speaking worlds as close together as possible, so that each shall thoroughly understand the courage and sacrifice and ideals of the other. This is the greatest political task of the future. For such a complete and lasting understanding is the only basis for the continued progress of civilization. I am proud to be associated in your thought, Mr. Mayor, with so fitting and happy an occasion, and only physical inability could cause absence.

Sincerely,

WALTER H. PAGE.

Page's improvement was only temporary; a day or two after this letter was written he began to sink rapidly; it was therefore decided to grant his strongest wish and take him to North Carolina. He arrived

in Pinehurst on December 12th, so weak that his son Frank had to carry him in his arms from the train.

"Well, Frank," said Page, with a slightly triumphant smile, "I did get here after all, didn't I?"

He lingered for a few days and died, at eight o'clock in the evening, on December 21st, in his sixty-fourth year. He suffered no pain. He was buried in the Page family plot in the Bethesda Cemetery near Aberdeen.

He was as much of a war casualty as was his nephew Allison Page, who lost his life with his face to the German machine guns in Belleau Wood.

THE END

Criteria - background -

Novels -

Setting

Characterization

plot -

theme - what it is about.